

Early Childhood Education Facility Dedicated



Linette Studabaker, Director of YCAP Head Start, spoke at the dedication of the Early Childhood Education facility, while Head Start staff looks on.

By CeCe Kneeland

Approximately 40 people were in attendance January 29 for the open house and dedication of the Early Childhood Education Facility, located near the Grand Ronde Chemical Dependency Program offices. Travis Benoist performed a cleansing ceremony prior to the blessing, which was given by Kathryn Harrison. The *Shantee Klootchman Tum Tum* drum group sang and played the "Restoration Song".

Guest speakers included Caroline Landis, the Director of Yamhill Community Action Agency, Linette Studabaker, Director of YCAP Head Start, Patty Schute, Special Education Coordinator, Dean Azule, Education Department Manager, and Mark Mercier, Tribal Council Chairman. A luncheon, complete with cake, was served in honor of the dedication.

Grand Ronde Head Start has moved to the new facility, and held their first classroom session there on Tuesday, February 16, 1993. Head Start staff includes Angela Bedortha, Head Teacher, Mary Cook, Assistant Teacher, and June Olson, Family Services Advocate.

Other staff who have offices in the building are Wendi Spencer, JOM Coordinator, Teresa Olson, Tribal Preschool Coordinator, and Rochelle Andrews, Before and After School Care Coordinator.

The new building has a large kitchen, play area, and fenced yard, which will soon be receiving play equipment.

For Teachers and Parents: What Not To Teach Children

Reprinted from *Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes*, Council on Interracial Books for Children.

Don't use alphabet cards that say A is for apple, B is for ball, and I is for Indian. The matter may seem to be a trivial one, but if you want your students or children to develop respect for Native Americans, don't start them out in Kindergarten equating Indians with things like apples and balls. Other short "i" words (ice, ink, or island) could be used, so stay away from I-is-for-Indian in your alphabet teachings.

Don't talk about Indians as though they belong in the past. Books and filmstrips often have titles like, "How the Indians Lived", as though there are not any living today. The fact is, that about 1.8 million Native Americans live in what is now the United States, many on reservations, and many in cities and towns. They are in all kinds of neighborhoods and schools and in all walks of life. Too many Native Americans live in conditions of poverty and powerlessness, but they are very much a part of the modern world. If the people who write books and filmstrips mean "How (particular groups of) Native Americans Lived Long Ago", then they should say so.

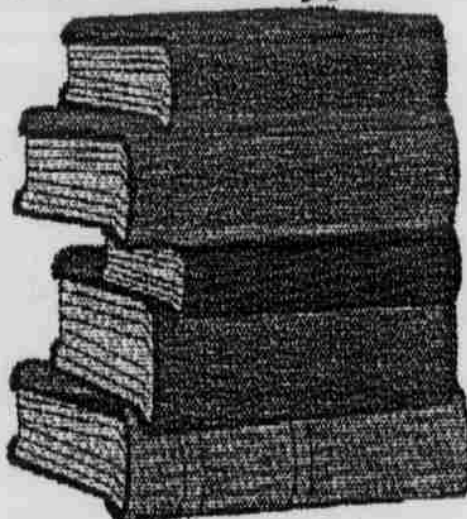
Don't talk about "them" and "us". A "them" and "us" approach reflects extreme insensitivity, as well as a misconception of historical facts. "They" are more truly "us" than anyone else. Native peoples are the original Americans and the only indigenous Americans since all of their ancestors were born on this land. Everyone else in this country is originally from somewhere else.

Don't lump all Native Americans together. There were no "Indians" before the Europeans came to America--that is, no people called themselves "Indians". They are Seminole or Menominee, etc. The hundreds of native groups scattered throughout the United States are separate peoples, separate nations. They have different languages, cultures, and names.

Native Americans of one nation were and are as different from Native Americans of another nation as Italians are from Swedes, Hungarians from the Irish, or the English from the Scottish. When referring to and teaching about Native Americans use the words "Indians" or Native Americans" as little as possible. Don't study the "Indians"-- study the Hopi, Nisqually, or the Apache.

Don't expect Native Americans to look like Hollywood movie "Indians". Some Native Americans tell a story about a white woman who visited the reservation. She stopped and stared at a young man, then said to him, "Are you a real Indian? You don't look like an Indian."

Educate, and end
the stereotypes...



Whatever it is that people expect Native Americans to look like, many do not fit these images. Since they come from different nations, their physical features, body structure and skin colors vary a great deal--and none has red skin. Of course, Native and non-Native Americans have intermarried so that many Native Americans today have European, African, or other ancestry. Therefore, don't expect Native Americans to all look alike, any more than white people look alike.

Don't let T.V. stereotypes go unchallenged. Unfortunately for both Native and non-Native American children, T.V. programs still show the savage warrior or occasionally the noble savage stereotypes. Discuss with your children the TV programs they watch. Help them understand that, from the Native American point of view, Columbus and other Europeans who came to this land were invaders. Even so, Native Americans originally welcomed and helped the European settlers. When they fought, they were no more "savage" than the Europeans and often less so. Help children understand that atrocities are a part of any war. In fact, war itself is atrocious. Help them understand that the Native Americans were defending land they had lived on for many thousands of years.

If Native Americans were no "savage warriors", neither were they "noble savages". They were no more or less noble than the rest of humanity.

Another common stereotype is the portrayal of the "Indian" as a person of few words, mostly "ugh". The fact is that early European settlers were aware of and commented specifically on the brilliance of Native American oratory and the beauty of their languages.

Stereotypes are sneaky. They influence the way we talk and live and play, sometimes without our knowing it. Don't say to your children, "You act like a bunch of wild Indians." Don't encourage or even allow your children to play "cowboys and Indians". Be sensitive to stereotypes in everything you say and do.