

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Foster Parents Needed

Indian Homes For Indian Children

The Tribal Foster Care Program is accepting applications for Foster Parents to provide a warm, loving, stable environment for displaced tribal children. If you are interested, please contact John Fraser, Foster Care Coordinator, at the Tribal family Action Program, extension 2039.



Help protect our generations.



Participants of the first Life Skills Seminar celebrate their achievement with their instructors.

Social Services Has Changed Much More Than Its Name

By Tracy Olson

The Tribal Family Action Program, (formally Social Services) has changed some of its policies and procedures with the five different programs it houses.

Mychal Childers, Intake/Referral Specialist, provides assessments to specific clients and helps direct them to the caseworker or program available to assist them in their situation.

The programs are: Indian Child Welfare, Domestic Violence, Foster Care, JOBS, and Intake/Referral.

"Explained Mychal, "Many of my referrals come from tribal members who are involved with other tribal programs such as Education, Mental Health, or Tribal Court. They might have connections in many of the Tribe's departments."



Mychal Childers, Intake/Referral Specialist, in front of the Tribal Family Action Program building.

In addition, Mychal has established working relationships with many of the state and county agencies set up to assist people in crisis situations. The Tribe's programs are limited to the Six County Service Area, so she might refer someone out of the area to a local agency which can help.

Theron Ruiz, who was recently hired as the Human Services Treatment Coordinator, says the department name change is a small aspect of how the programs are changing. He said, "We want our focus to be on problem-solving and life changes. There are things that are more important than money. Our main goal as a division is to educate and give our clients hope so they don't repeat the same mistakes over again."

In the past, the Social Services Program has experienced some understandably upset people who have found themselves in a crisis situation. Although it's sometimes frustrating to deal with large organizations in emergency-situations, part of the Tribal Family Action Program's new policy is not to tolerate verbal abuse or threats. Said Theron, "I want clients to understand we are working with them in solving their problems. We have limited services here, but we will work with you."

Mychal receives about 25 referrals per month, most of which remain permanent clients she has to follow-up on. All clients are different, and have different backgrounds as well as different needs. Each one has to be handled separately, and that takes time. She says that everyone in the Family Action Program works together to resolve the client's problem. She said, "This is a very emotional job. I see a lot of people in crisis. But when I see a person who has changed his or her life for the better by getting out of an abusive situation or getting an education, that's where a lot of rewards come from."

Participants Endorse Life Skills

The first *Life Skills For Independence Seminar* is currently taking place in Grand Ronde for many tribal members and JOBS participants. The four week seminar covers a variety of topics including career planning and job search, personal development, and support services. Coordinated through a program at Chemeketa Community College, all participants receive college credit for attending this seminar.

But it isn't a normal classroom. The participants talk about the things they want to accomplish in life, the barriers they have faced, and work together to find solutions. Part of the class in developing the skills we all need in our job search or applying for college, and part of the class focuses on strength and inner confidence we need to accomplish our goals.

Said Jeremiah Foster, a Life Skills participant, "In my past I wanted a career in medicine, but was talked out of it by people in my life. Now I know I can go for it."

Another *Life Skills* member, Ed Ashman said, "I'm being treated like a human being, not a statistic. I know I can turn my dream into a reality now."

As a whole, the group highly recommended the class to anyone who is in need of the skills being offered. In fact, they thought the seminar should be available to everyone.