

Grand Ronde Facilities Featured In Award-winning OPB Documentary

■ "The Way Home" shows how Tribal Elders benefit from range of facilities.

By Ron Karten

"The Way Home: Finding Your Place in the Golden Years" aired on Oregon Public Broadcasting on November 27, 2001. The documentary followed families facing their living options in their so-called 'golden' years. It dealt with such issues as how family adapts to changes when parents can no longer handle an independent lifestyle, the importance of belonging to a community, transportation and health care.

The Tribal Wellness Center, the Community

Center and Elder Housing at the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde were all features of one segment of the film, showing how these integrated facilities play an important part in the lives of our Tribal Elders.

The documentary, produced by Jessica Martin, won a "Freddie Award in New York, which has been described as "the Oscar of health care filmmaking," and also the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Health Consumer Entry. For

the Helen Hayes Award, "The Way Home" competed against work produced by Dateline NBC, HBO, Discover, TLC, ABC's Good Morning America and ABC Primetime News.

"I couldn't believe it," said Martin.

The Providence Health System with support from the NW Health Foundation and the Oregon Department of Human Services, seniors and People with Disabilities sponsored the effort. ■

"Restoring the Sacred Circle" is Best Public Service film at Indian Film Institute

■ Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison plays prominent role in award winning film about Elder Abuse Prevention.

By Ron Karten

The film premiered at the National Indian Council on Aging Conference held September 5 in Albuquerque, NM. Tribal Elders came back enthralled with the production — enthralled and educated.

On November 9, "Restoring the Sacred Circle; Responding to Elder Abuse in American Indian Communities" was named best "Public Service" film at the American Indian Film Institute (AIFI) in San Francisco. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) participated in both events.

One reason was that Elder abuse is much on people's minds these days, here as elsewhere. A surprise for many who saw the video was the prominent role played by Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison, CTGR's former Tribal Council Chair.

"Much as I enjoyed doing my part," said Harrison, "I felt it was sad that we were doing it. But if we have one poor Elder understand that they have rights, then the whole thing was worth it."

Harrison was the prominent face on the cover of the video, and maybe the most visible "non-actor" starring in this video made almost completely with non-actors. The one exception was narrator Gary Farmer, a Canadian and member of the Cayuga Nation within the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy. Farmer has worked as an actor, director, producer and journalist, including appearances in such movies as *Smoke Signals*, and such television productions as *China Beach*, *Miami Vice*, *The Job*, *The Pretender* and *The West Wing*.

The video was developed in response to one of the ten needs identified at a special caucus of American Indians held at the U.S. Department of Justice Symposium on Elder Victimization in October 2000, in Washington, D.C., said Aileen Kaye, Abuse Prevention Program Coordinator for the Oregon Department of Human Services.

"I heard all these terrible stories about Indian people but all these other people too," said Harrison. "We all kind of looked around and said, this is worse than what we thought."

The film ultimately came out as one concrete result, but in the process, the state also worked with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) on Elder Abuse Training, said Kaye. "The result of that training has now become a model training program for the country."

The training program is useful for Tribal social service providers, Tribal police, Tribal judges, victim assistance staff, health workers and other medical personnel that assist Tribes in responding to the problem of Elder abuse, said Kaye.

Kaye's office is now in the process of sending copies of the video to all of the country's 560 Tribes. And copies of the training also are

without Harrison, who was Tribal Council Chair at the time, or the help throughout the production of Tribal members Bonnie Tom and Sharon Wood, both of the Tribe's Social Services Department.

And everybody praised the Yakama Nation, which was only slated to be the setting for part of the video, but helped out again when another

Tribe set to be a location in the film backed out at the last minute.

Representatives of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Trenton Indian Ser-

vice Area, Nez Perce Tribe, Quinalt Indian Nation, Klamath Tribes and the National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA) all served on an advisory committee for the video. ■



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~Kathryn Harrison
Former Tribal Council Chairwoman

being made available.

On the way to the success of this project, Director Phil Lucas, a Choctaw film director based in Issaquah, Washington, encountered resistance from both individuals sought to act in the production and from Tribes, both worried because the issue is so controversial. "I think an awful lot of (the challenge) was finding people to cooperate. I think there was quite a bit of reluctance," said Lucas.

Ironically, however, the presentation "comes off really real," said Lucas, because those in the film were principally not actors. "In Albuquerque, there was not a dry eye in the place."

The production developed out of a \$75,000 U.S. Department of Justice grant targeting outreach with Tribes regarding Elder abuse, said Kaye.

Lucas credited Kaye and Lee G. LaFontaine, Grants Manager at the State Human Resources Department. "Working with the Oregon State Department of Human Services, that's the best I've ever worked with any government," said Lucas. "They were aces to work with."

And Kaye said it never would have come off

Phil Lucas, Director

His credits also include the influential "The Honor of All," the 1987 film about the Alkalai Lake Band Indians based in British Columbia, who at the time of the filming were 100 percent alcoholic, according to Lucas, and today are 95 percent sober. That film launched the sobriety movement in Indian Country, and pioneered the use of non-actors in film, said Lucas.

Lucas credits his interest in film to the epic western film, *Stagecoach*, starring John Wayne, which came out when he was 12. Attending a predominantly Indian theater, Lucas saw everybody — himself included — cheering for the cavalry. "I walked the ten miles home," said Lucas. "I wondered, 'how could we be so manipulated?'"

Now, he uses those same techniques of drama and character building to make his films effective.

"When you have an emotional event that touches somebody's heart, they can change. Nobody's behavior ever changed by an intellectual argument," he said.

He also noted that many Elders experience abuse, but do not know it is abuse. "I thought they were just being mean," is a common reaction," said Lucas. "Until they have a name for it, they don't know that it exists. That's what this video does. It gives it a name."

Wide-ranging interests lead Lucas to some of the most important issues in Indian country. "One of the things that really intrigues me," said Lucas, "I read a thing from the Census Bureau that 80 percent of Indians will be in cities. What does that mean for language, culture, for extended family, Tribal structure, for sovereignty?"

Lucas currently is senior producer for Native American Public Telecommunications based in Lincoln, Nebraska, which is developing a two-part project — Native Americans in the 21st Century — for the Public Broadcasting System. The first part deals with Cherokees on a reservation in rural North Carolina, and the second looks at some of the 170,000 Indians living in Los Angeles. "We've got all the issues revealed through individual lives," said Lucas. The film is expected to air in late fall or early winter.