

## HeadStart & Preschool

By Elaine Lane

The Grand Ronde HeadStart/Preschool served a total of forty-three families this year. Twenty-one children graduated, four of whom had attended the Chinuk Immersion School part day. May marks the first year anniversary of the program's move into the new Education campus. The children and staff hosted a small celebration complete with strawberry shortcake and gifts made by the children.

This fall also marks another milestone for the program. It is the five-year anniversary of becoming a federally granted HeadStart program. Since the early beginnings, the Grand Ronde HeadStart/Preschool has made great gains. The number of families served has increased, the services provided have been improved, the staff have continued their paths toward attaining higher education, a new facility was planned and moved into and the first federal review of the program showed the staff's hard work to be exemplary.

Toni Lockwood deserves special kudos for being within a few credits of attaining her Associates' Degree in Early Childhood Education. She also completed the Childcare Development Associate process and is now awaiting the final results which can take up to several months after completion of the course.

Another source of pride for the program is how the parents of our Alumni have gone on to become advocates for their children in older grades. These parents get involved in their children's schooling and make a positive difference.

The current parents have also become very involved this year. Sandy Bobb, Parent Policy Council Chairperson, quickly learned to run efficient and productive meetings each month. Other members of the Policy Council included: Sunni Ulestad, Maria Stewart, Alta Getzler, Leah Hankins, Lindy Trolan and Susan Reyes, Parent Representative. Past members include: Tyson Mercier and Daniel Haug.

Some Parent Policy Council members, along

with Tribal Council members Ed Pearsall and Valorie Sheker-Robertson, also attended The First AI/AN Program Branch Regional HeadStart and Early HeadStart Conference in Washington, D.C. Due to the major changes in administration of HeadStart from the federal government, it was very important for members of Tribal Council to attend this meeting.

The 2002-2003 school year was marked with many memorable events, including literacy nights, field trips, parent sponsored activities and increased community input into curricular activities. Ten literacy nights were offered this year with one book being translated into Chinuk by the Immersion staff. Some of the highlights of field trips this year were: the Pumpkin Patch, plays at the historic Elsinore Theater, A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village, Enchanted Forest, Pacific City family trip and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual trip to the aquarium partnering with the SMILE program from Willamina. The Immersion classroom also held the first Immersion weekend at Silver Creek Falls State Park, where families were able to use Chinuk to communicate with each other for two days. Junelle Fox, with assistance from the Parent Committee and Parent Policy Committee Representative, Susan Reyes, also organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Penny Drive to raise money for children's ride tickets at Enchanted Forest and planned and hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Parent Committee Luau.

The children were also blessed by opportunities to visit the Elders for lunch and to present them with artwork throughout the year. The children also made seasonal artwork to decorate the Tribal Council Chambers.

Junelle helped increase community support in the program by scheduling volunteers to read to the preschoolers in the new Education Library each Monday morning. Over thirty readers, including Tribal staff, Elders, Tribal Council members, community members, and parents honored the program by reading and storytelling

throughout the year.

The preschool staff also began recruiting community people to share their musical talents. Music is a large piece in the preschool curriculum and the added community support helped to strengthen that piece this school year. The preschoolers learned about drumming, rattles, flutes and other more contemporary instruments. Jan Michael Reibach also became a regular visitor, beginning to teach the children about traditional music and playing for them. Jan will be visiting again this year to help the children learn to play simple notes on flutes the program has purchased for them.

Tony Johnson again worked with children each week to strengthen their Chinuk wawa and Travis Mercier began to teach the children the traditional stick game. Travis was also able to begin a pen pal program with students from the southwest. The program owes a large debt of gratitude to Jackie Whisler, who donated the use of her digital camera throughout the year, so that many art projects and thank-yous could be made from the children's photos.

The program was able to assist many families through trainings and other provided services this year, as well. Tim Bucknell was certified as a trainer of trainers for Indian Health Services nutrition program, and was then able to provide an excellent training for families about child nutrition. Other parent trainings included child guidance, shame-free parenting, down to earth Dads and CPR First Aid course.

One of the greatest effects of the program this year was improvement in overall child health. The curriculum, trainings offered and services provided from dental, wellness and prevention, among others, all came together to help families better understand how to keep their children healthier. Children's self-esteem was boosted as they learned how to make healthier choices in their lives.

### The HeadStart/Preschool 2001 - 2002 Staff

- ◆ Vikki Bishop — ECE Director
- ◆ Tera Stewart — Administrative Assistant
- ◆ Junelle Fox — Health and Family Partnerships Coordinator
- ◆ Tim Bucknell — Nutrition Services Department
- ◆ Toni Lockwood — Head Teacher, younger room
- ◆ Elaine Lane — Head Teacher, older room, Disabilities and Education Coordinator
- ◆ Travis Mercier — Aftercare Supervisor
- ◆ Jackie Long — Assistant Teacher, older room
- ◆ Amber Grodus — Assistant Teacher, younger room
- ◆ Kacey Elrich — Bus Driver/Aide, younger room
- ◆ Daniel Haug — Bus Driver/Aide, older room
- ◆ Brian Campbell — former Bus Driver/Aide, younger room
- ◆ Tara Leno — former Bus Driver/Aide, older room
- ◆ Rachelle Kellogg — Aftercare Advisor
- ◆ John Gregg — Classroom Aide, older room
- ◆ David Holmes — Bus Monitor
- ◆ Sam George — Bus Monitor
- ◆ Brenda Wilson — One-on-one Assistant, Public School
- ◆ Roxanne Moniz — On-call Substitute
- ◆ Jamie Bazzy — On-call Substitute
- ◆ Matt Zimbrick — High School Intern
- ◆ Gary Guzman — High School Intern

#### Chinuk Immersion Classroom Staff:

- ◆ Tony Johnson — Linguist, Teacher
- ◆ Bobby Mercier — Language Specialist, Teacher
- ◆ Jackie Whisler — Language Specialist, Teacher
- ◆ Elaine Lane — Language Specialist, Teacher
- ◆ Ali Holsclaw — High School Intern

Photos courtesy of HeadStart/Preschool



Madison Leno (left), Jasper Lillard and Justin Howerton smile as they show off their cardboard house.



Ashley Cunningham (left) and Laurisa Logan play at the Children's Museum in Portland, Oregon during the 2002-2003 Spring Break.