

## New College Counselor And Career Advisor Wants To Help Tribal Students To A More Fulfilling Life Through Education

By Peta Tinda

Rachel Warner is the new College Counselor and Career Advisor for the Tribal Education Department, a position she's held since December 17.

She is originally from Oregon, grew up in Eugene and went to college at Western Oregon University, where she earned her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology.

Afterwards, she attended Lewis and Clark College, where she received her Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology.

In her new position she helps potential students access colleges, fill out applications and helps Tribal students with the sometimes-confusing world of college attendance.

"I help undecided college students narrow down their choices and access college programs, fill out financial aid forms and applications and visit college campuses," said Warner.

"I have always loved education and I would like to help other people catch the education bug," she said. "College degrees just help you, they open doors for you and you end up doing things you wouldn't think you'd be doing."

In today's modern economy almost every job requires some form of college degree, something the Tribal Education Department recognizes, which is why they provide counselors like Warner to help would-be college students with the college enrollment process.

Having come from a background in counseling at a low-income facility in Salem, Warner said that not having a good education affects a student's life in more ways that are immediately apparent, such as their mental and physical health and access to resources that are available.

"It's not just about money, but people feel more

fulfilled with better jobs and have more successful lives," said Warner.

In her spare time, Warner enjoys hiking, biking and the outdoors.

She also has a particular love of animals that goes far beyond her three cats, Piggy, Buddy and Rocky. She volunteers to do reptile shows to grade school kids, through collaboration between the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) and Brad's World of Reptiles out of Portland.

"I like to carry around a 70-pound python around my neck," she said.

She once worked with dolphins during a summer internship in Hawaii and when she was in California, she was employed at a movie studio called "Wild Things," where she worked with various large predators, including bears, lions and tigers.

"I'm surprised I'm still alive. I saw one of my fellow counselors get dragged by lion — but I really enjoyed it," she said in the same breath.

"I'm all about exploring," said Warner.

She also volunteers for the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon, or FCCO, which does community spay and neuter clinics. "To reduce the number of unwanted kitties," she said.

Warner encourages her students to pursue summer internships.

"There are so many internships available — they're a great chance to gain work experience, make friends and create networks for future employment.

And the experiences last a lifetime — they're price-



Rachel Warner

Photo by Peta Tinda

less."

She has an extensive to-do list for this spring, including arranging campus visits to seven different colleges and universities around Oregon. She is also organizing the annual college and career fair at the Tribe's new gymnasium in April, where students can meet with and talk to any of the dozens of college recruiters who is present.

She encourages anyone who's interested to come in and talk to her.

"I'd like students to come in and sit down so we can figure out a career path that would be the most fulfilling for them."

Having an education helps to give people a better life, with more opportunities to succeed, said Warner. "It helps people to have a more fulfilling life."

## Lynden Jones, K-5 Site Supervisor, Joins Education Department

By Ron Karten

With the elimination of the Before part of the old Before and After Program at the start of this school year, Lynden Jones came on as K-5 Site Supervisor for the Education Department with something of a new mandate.

The change came because the Grand Ronde Elementary program merged with the Willamina Elementary program in Willamina, a long way and no ride back to the Before and After modulars behind what is now the middle school for Grand Ronde and Willamina students.

Today, the K-5 program runs from 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., and continues to offer tutoring at both Willamina and Sheridan Elementary schools. All that is needed to get some tutoring going for a young



Photo by Toby McClary

student is the request of a parent or teacher, according to Jones. "We tutor in schools, 8:30-2:30," said Jones, "and then out here."

The program includes two tutors and Jones, who mixes tutoring with her other obligations as a site supervisor. Openings remain both for tutoring in school and at

the modulars in Grand Ronde, said Jones.

She previously worked for the Dallas School District as an educational assistant based at Rickreall Elementary — she called it "a great little country school" — tutoring in all subjects and teaching the language arts. Actually, she said, "(I did) every-

thing you could possibly do in a small school."

A Sheridan area resident, Jones is married with children. And for fun? "Do you think there's time?" she asked. "I have two kids." The family goes camping, horseback riding, and to sporting events.

She is working on her Master's Degree in Education. "My goal?" she said. She recalled from her time at Rickreall, "We could get great discussions going with the older groups." And then she said: "I would really like to teach 4<sup>th</sup> grade."

Here in Grand Ronde, "Parental support has been great," said Jones. "We have some high school interns which is a wonderful opportunity for them and for us. All the extra hands are great. The more one on one with the kids, the better it is."

## Chinuk Wawa Class Creates Dedicated Students

■ Tribal member Diane Smith liked the last class so much that she sent photos and testimonials to *Smoke Signals*.

By Ron Karten

In one email, Tribal member and marathon runner Diane Smith (See *Smoke Signals*, 1/1/03 issue) described the Native stick game played in class. "This is what I meant," she wrote, "by my comment, 'More than a Language Class.' We learned parts of our culture and it was like having a glimpse into my ancestors' world and for that I am so grateful.

"It's like watching a language being reborn," she wrote. "This is such a vital part of our culture and I feel it is a gift from our Elders. Learning Chinuk Wawa is a gift that we should continue to give to our children because it is more than just a language. It is a part of who we are."

"We've had nothing but good responses from those who took the class," said Tribal member Bobby Mercier, Language Specialist and assistant teacher for the class. Tony Johnson, Education Coordinator for the Culture Department, leads the class.

"The class usually starts off with a history of the language, the origin of it," said Mercier. "Then we start out with basic phrases and words. Usually at



Photo courtesy of Diane Smith

the very end of the class, we have a potluck and do our last test and our stick game."

Old stories from Grand Ronde history and those told by Elders also are part of each class, said Mercier.

The winter term class began January 12 and will run 10 weeks, through March 15. It meets Monday nights from 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. in the Tribal Community Center. And though it is already underway, Mercier expects that spaces will continue to be available.

It may not always be that way. Mercier said that attendance has tripled over the last year.

"I had a wonderful time," wrote Tribal member Carol Haskins, Smith's sister, in an email, "and learned more than I thought I ever could."

**Together**— Maria Haskins holds her cousin Joshua Smith as he drums during the stick game held at the end of the class. On Haskin's right is Tribal Language Specialist Bobby Mercier, one of the class's teachers.