

## Tribe's Summer Youth Employment Program Continues Its Success

■ Young people get real life, on-the-job experience and mentoring.

By Jack Ham

For five years, the Summer Youth Program has provided Tribal youth with work opportunities in Tribal departments including, Housing Authority, Members Benefits, Human Resources at Spirit Mountain Casino, HeadStart/Preschool, Social Services, Community Fund, Facilities (Grounds), Library, Information Systems, Facilities (Housekeeping), Youth Education, preschool kitchen and *Smoke Signals*.

The Summer Youth Program provides work for kids 14-17. It first opened in the late '90s. The program served 48 young people this year. Working with the Tribes gives young people the opportunity to get to know what it is like to wake up and go to work Monday through Friday, organize their hours and receive a paycheck.

"It's a good opportunity for students to gain work place or employment skills and they can learn about different jobs," said Education Division Manager Marion Mercier. Among the skills students learned, Mercier named "learning about how important attendance is, demonstrating workplace behaviors and time management. Learning about different jobs is important because they learn (what they like) to do and don't like to do. They go through the interview process and it gives them a chance to earn money. When you work for something it has more value."

"It gives the kids the opportunity to make a little money during summer,"

said General Manager Cliff Adams. "(It) provides training and discipline for the kids, work experience for the kids. It's important the kids are in a constructive activity."

"(The purpose is) to provide work experience opportunities for Tribal youth ages 14-17," said Youth Education Pro-

gram Coordinator Marie Heimburg. "It gives youth a good work opportunity (and) enhances their work ethic. We anticipate (staying) with the program as long as Tribal Council continues to

fund it. The past two summers, the program has worked well because we have had increased department and Youth Education (participation)."

"It (also) gives them past work experience for future employment," said Youth Education Tutor Chris Bailey.

"Our goal is to continue developing

where *Smoke Signals* is created. I can really feel now what it is like to be a real business man with my own desk, computer, phone with extension number, email and my very own reporter's notepad.

My normal day on the job consisted of typing articles, learning how the newspaper is laid out, delivering the newspaper, interviewing people, writing the stories and taking pictures for the stories.

Working with *Smoke Signals* gave me the chance to know my Tribe better. Pulling off money this summer has just been a bonus because the real heart of this job is working with talented people like Brent Merrill, Marty George, Toby McClary, Ron Karten, Justin Phillips and Peta Tinda who are like a family to me. I hope to return to this spot again because the *Smoke Signals*' office has been a home to me.

Other Summer Interns also had comments on their experiences:

"So us kids can have an experience for a job later in our lives," said Youth Education Intern Kelsey Lord.

"I like it. It is really fun," said Spirit Mountain Community Fund Intern Katherine Warren. "I think it is important because it gives kids the chance to see what the work environment is."

"I feel it's fun and it's important because you get a lot of skills for when we graduate and get our real jobs," said Youth Education Intern Valeria Atanacio.

"It gives us kids a chance to learn about having a job," said K-5 Program worker Megan Zimbrick.



Photo by Peta Tinda

**Looking Good** — Production Assistant Marty George looks over *Smoke Signal's* Student Intern Young Jack Ham's shoulder during the Summer Youth Program's end-of-the-year luncheon. Summer youth were recognized for their summer's work at the Tribal offices. The Summer Youth Program gave 48 Tribal youth the chance to work and experience a hands-on, on-the-job training. Young Jack spent weeks at a time with the each staff member at the Public Information Office.

gram Coordinator Marie Heimburg. "It gives youth a good work opportunity (and) enhances their work ethic. We anticipate (staying) with the program as long as Tribal Council continues to

the program so it can provide a high quality work experience for all Tribal youth."

On July 7, I was first introduced to work in the Public Information office

## 2003-2004 Preschool Graduation



**Smile** — Tribal member Tracy Howerton takes a picture of son, Justin, (far left in red) at this year's preschool graduation.



**Gift** — Lauren Lucio, (center) age 5, tries out one of the necklaces given to the graduates.

Photos by Peta Tinda



**Ready For The Next Level** — Graduates Madison Leno, Jerry Clifford, Nicholas Larsen, Micah Rogers, (facing away) and Tommy Dawson wait to receive their degrees from the preschool staff.



**Caring** — Language Specialist Jackie Whisler hugs Alexis Cortez.