

Grand Ronde Hosts Youth Leadership



Photos by Toby McClary

Youth Movement — On March 10-12, Youth Education hosted the 2nd Annual Youth Conference. About 140 students and 20 chaperones attended. There were workshops, a hip-hop dance and a three-on-three basketball tournament. Youth Education invited keynote speaker Robert Johnston from the Native Wellness Institute.



Robert Johnston

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"He was excellent," said Heimburg. "It was empowering for the youth to know that these events are happening all around the country."

About 140 students and 20 chaperones participated in this year's conference, more than doubling last year's total of 60 students.

"We even had to turn some students down due to facility restrictions," said Heimburg.

Students from all across the state joined together for the numerous activities held at the Tribal Education Complex in Grand Ronde. It was a regional invitation. Students from Chemawa, Siletz, Lincoln City, Roseburg and the Native American Youth Association attended.

On Friday night, the students gathered in the Tribal gymnasium for a hip-hop concert, dance and a freestyle rap battle. The all Native hip-hop crew, Culture Shock Camp, featuring D.J. "Shock B," Rapper Marcus "Queese" Frejo and Rapper "Duo," put on a show and even challenged some of the local Tribal youth to an MC battle and freestyle competition. The group also included two "B-Boys" (break dancers) to dance on stage and among the audience during the show.

Brian Frejo, (D.J. "Shock B"), is an accomplished artist and has opened for many headlining hip-hop groups including 50 Cent, Ceelo and Lil John. His younger brother Marcus "Queese" Frejo has also won many awards as a rapper and musical producer. Culture Shock Camp is sponsored by an American

Indian clothing company — Native Threads. The camp tours the nation looking for Indian reservations to influence wellness among Native youth.

Tribal member and Tribal Youth Prevention Coordinator Lisa Leno organized the dance and explained that she wants to set up events for youth that have a healthy, safe and positive atmosphere.

Indian Boarding School took home trophies.

Marissa Buckles (Sioux) and Dante Grant (Omaha), both students from Chemawa, organized the tournament and said that it took about three months to get everything coordinated.

"It's a positive thing to bring everyone together, but most importantly, it's about having fun," said

"This was a really positive event. I was surprised to see how much talent we have right here in Grand Ronde."

~ Lisa Leno

Tribal Youth Prevention Coordinator

"This was a really positive event," said Leno. "I was surprised to see how much talent we have right here in Grand Ronde."

Beginning at about noon on Saturday, there was a three on three basketball tournament in the gymnasium. The tournament was coed and there were 14 teams competing for t-shirts that were awarded to first, second and third place teams. Trophies were handed out to the top boy's team and the top girl's team.

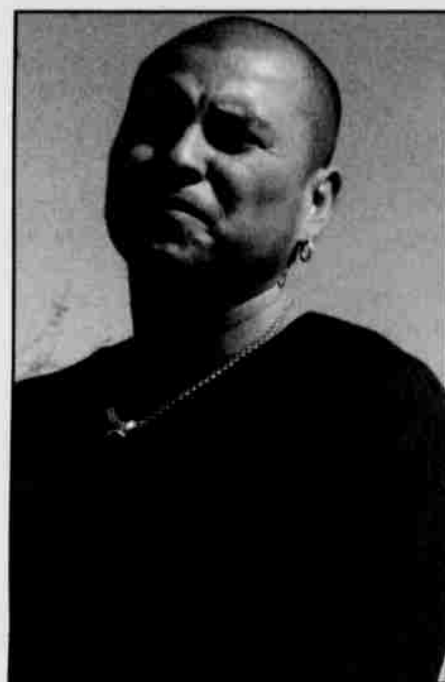
Yellow Stones (girls) and Nato (boys), both teams from Chemawa

Grant.

Grant is a junior at Chemawa and holds a 4.0 grade point average. He is excited about college and is interested in going to either Oregon State University or Fort Lewis College after he graduates.

Buckles, a sophomore, plans to attend college as well. She wants to play basketball for Montana State University and says that if she does well there, the Women's National Basketball Association may be in her future.

"I just really enjoy playing basketball," said Buckles.



Brian Frejo "Shock B"

The continuous growth of this event has left the Youth Education Department and the Youth Leaders Group wondering if the Grand Ronde facilities are large enough to host upcoming conferences, but seem very pleased with the outcome of the previous two years.

"Overall, this event has been a huge success," said Heimburg. "I want to think that each student leaves with a positive thought to carry with them." ■



The Atmosphere In Here — The students danced to the beats of Culture Shock Camp, a hip-hop group sponsored by Native Threads clothing line on the evening of Friday, March 11. Students also took part in a free-style battle on stage. D.J. Brian Frejo aka "Shock B" also spoke earlier that afternoon on his life experiences and battles with gangs and drugs.