

Career Development Starts From Within

■ At Spirit Mountain Casino, the "cornerstone" program for Tribal employees is one they choose themselves.



Photo by Toby McClary

Tribal Member Advocate — The Career Development program, which is held once a year, is coordinated by the Human Resources Department for Spirit Mountain Casino. Tribal Elder Sam Henny instructs the course held at Human Resources. "It's an introduction to self-awareness," said Henny.

By Ron Karten

Once a year for two days, the Spirit Mountain Casino's Human Resources Department offers a program for Tribal employees with an interest in exploring their potentials and discovering their special skills.

"Maybe you need a different line of work," said Tribal member and *Smoke Signals* Photojournalist Toby McClary, "but you're not sure what. Maybe you're interested in different things. Maybe the casino wasn't the right place for me. Then the newspaper job opened up. Had I not gone through this class, I probably would have stayed at the casino."

McClary is among a small and growing number of Tribal members who have gone through the Tribal Development class and gone on to find a career that suits him.

Of course, it didn't hurt in McClary's assessment of his current job that one of his first assignments was to photograph the President of the United States, the nation's Secretary of State and Presidential candidate, whatshisname Kerry, all in person, all in the nation's capital, and that he came back with the goods.

"Toby's story really touched me," said Tribal Elder Mike Larsen, who manages the casino on an interim basis from time to time. Larsen had not taken the course, but regarding McClary, Larsen commented on what

success can mean in this program. "I've seen his growth as a man. I'm really proud of him."

McClary may never have had the chance without this program run by Spirit Mountain's Human Resources wiz Sam Henny. Her title is Tribal Development.

One result of this program, said Mike Larsen, "If you can feel better about yourself, the perception of you is going to be different."

Henny reinforced that concept with the following definition of reputation: "The story you tell about yourself and the stories that people tell about you."

"We want to get them to a place where they feel enriched," said Henny, "where they are able to seek every opportunity for advancement. Many have goals in mind. For some, we're going to establish goals."

Tribal employees of the casino "self-select" themselves for this course, said Henny.

The class includes several assessments that help an employee "know who they are," said Henny. "If you don't know who you are, you don't know where you want to go."

The class begins the process of "identifying interests, values, basic skills and abilities," said Henny. "There is a strong emphasis on value assessment. It's an introduction to self-

awareness."

"It didn't take me long to see that numbers weren't my thing," said Tribal member Carol Larsen of her early days in the Accounts Payable section of the casino. "Human Resources was my goal." Today, Larsen is a Human Resources Specialist.

The program started in 2000. Twenty three current casino employees are now graduates. Among them, three are casino directors, five are managers and one is a supervisor, said Henny.

Two graduates of the class have joined the Tribal government and 10 have moved on from Tribal employment, whether from the casino or the government, said Henny. "If they decide this isn't the place, that's fine. We want them to be a success in whatever they do."

"Networking," one of the side benefits of the course, and one of the lessons, "put things in perspective for me," said Tribal member David DeHart, also a Human Resources Specialist. "It helped me appreciate the bigger picture."

"It opened my eyes a lot," said Sarah Harvey, Sam's daughter and a Employee Relations and Benefits Manager who saw the value of the program. "I took power over my career," said Harvey. "I had been waiting for others to do it for me."

All of these employees — some former graduates of the class, some

this year's graduates — described their experiences at a meeting at the Spirit Mountain Human Resources office on Thursday, June 30 at the end of this year's class.

The pre-packaged program looked like a good fit from the beginning, said Tribal member Camille Mercier, the casino's Human Resources Director, but it was key that it be tailored for the special audience here in Grand Ronde.

Among the lessons of the course: "If you think you're going to take your weakness and turn it into a strength," said Mercier, "you're setting yourself up to fail." The right question, she said, is, "how can I leverage my weakness to help my strength?"

The program, currently available only to Tribal employees, is a concrete example of the Tribe's effort to give preference in hiring and advancement to Tribal members, said Henny.

At a banquet held Tuesday, July 19, in honor of the graduates, Tribal Elder and Casino General Manager Randy Dugger told the graduates: "The journey within us is understanding who we are," and he proposed a definition of success: "When preparation meets opportunity. It's difficult to prepare when you're not sure where you are going but prepare anyway. The most important thing is to continue that process. A career is waiting," he said. "You will find it or it will find you."



Photo by Ron Karten

Inspiration — Tribal member and Human Resources Specialist Joann Mercier and son and *Smoke Signal's* photojournalist Toby McClary speak about their successes after completing the Career Development program. On Thursday, June 30, Mercier, along with other graduating members, described their awareness and ability to identify where they stand in their career goals.

New Accounts Receivable Tech Spreads Her Wings

■ Linda Meyer and her husband now live in Grand Ronde.

By Jack Ham,
Smoke Signals Intern

Linda Meyer, the Tribe's new Accounts Receivable Technician, is a woman who feels blessed to be where she is in life. Today, Meyers handles accounting done with the phone system, day care and bank deposits.

"My managers have enabled me to spread my wings," said Meyer.

Meyer has had experience working in the accounting field for sixteen years. All of her previous jobs were in the corporate field. Now, she is excited about learning the important parts of government accounting. For

example, the Tribe does a lot more work with government grants than the corporations she has worked for over the years.

Another exciting part of the Tribe, said Meyer, is working with Elders. "They call up with questions on how to pay bills and phone service."

Most recently, Meyer and her husband Daryl moved to Oregon after living out of state. Meyer's husband has family in Willamina.

Meyer and her family constructed their house in five months located in Grand Ronde. Meyer found her accounting job here at Grand Ronde

through Accountemps, an agency for people interested in accounting.

For the future, Meyer hopes to finish her BA degree in Accounting. She intends to go back to school in the fall at Chemeketa to accomplish the goal.

She also looks forward to working with Controller Jody Jerger, Assistant Controller Mike Hubbard and Budget/Treasury Manager Rick Anderson, to learn as much as possible about the Tribal government.

Meyers personal hobbies away from work include mountain biking, camping, learning how to clean up brush from her 12-acre yard and waking up



Photo by Rhannon Wheeler

to see quails, hawks and eagles that are so beautiful, especially compared to previous areas she has lived.

Meyer strongly believes in patience. "It's taking the time and having patience to help one another," she said. "That's what it's all about."