

Tribal Youth Uncovers The "Gateway To China" In 17 Days

■ Nikki Norwest wanted to explore a culture outside her own.

By Toby McClary

Tribal member Nikki Norwest, a senior at Willamina High School, jumped on the opportunity of a lifetime, a trip to Beijing, China.

With financial support from her grandparents, Tribal Elder Marce Norwest and his wife Sharon, Nikki began her journey to China on Thursday, July 14.

"Chinese culture is a lot different than Native American culture," said Norwest, "I wanted to learn a different culture than my own."

Norwest was invited to China by the People To People-Student Ambassador Program which was founded in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Through outdoor adventures, hands-on cultural experiences and a behind-the-scenes look at historical figures and landmarks, the invitation-only program is used to promote peace through understanding between individual citizens of the world. All seven continents have been traveled by Student Ambassadors helping to fulfill Eisenhower's vision of a better world.

"As Nikki's former HeadStart teacher, I can say that I am not surprised she was selected among many of her peers for this outstanding opportunity," said Tribal Council member Angie Blackwell. "She is truly an up and coming leader and an asset to the Tribe. I applaud her family for ensuring her participation in this experience."

The People-To-People program, which will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2006, chooses 30-40 students from across the United States and takes them to a different country each year. This year's trip was titled "Gateways to China" and covered many of China's historical cities including Beijing, Xian, Shanghai and Hong Kong. The 17-day journey was open to high school and junior high school

students and also enables the students to earn transferable high school and college credits.

Norwest was approached earlier this year by Delegation Leader Nancy Matthews who asked her to do an interview. After Norwest's explanation about how and why she wanted to learn other cultures, she received a phone call informing her that she qualified for the trip to China. Norwest then attended one seminar each month for six months to learn Chinese cultures, rituals and beliefs and to become acquainted with the other students invited.



Trip Of A Lifetime — On Thursday, July 14, Tribal member Nikki Norwest began a 17-day journey to China. Norwest toured many of China's historical sites including Tiananmen Square which is an entrance to China's Old Forbidden City.

Then it was time for Norwest and the other selected individuals to begin their tour through one of the Earth's largest countries. China is 9.6 million square kilometers (about 6 million square miles) and has a population of

1.3 billion people.

Norwest explained that the weather was a bit overwhelming.

"It was so hot and humid," said Norwest. "I couldn't even breathe."

Among the many activities planned for the students such as a visit to Tiananmen Square and the Old Forbidden City, Norwest also spent two nights in the home of a local farming family near

teresting part of her trip was the visit to the site of the Terra Cotta Warriors.

The Terra Cotta Warriors were discovered in 1974 in Shaanxi, China. Chinese peasants stumbled across the warriors acci-



Photo by Toby McClary

dentally while digging a well for local irrigation. The ancient burial-site turned out to be the tomb of the first Chinese Emperor Qin Shihuangdi. Surrounding the tomb is over 7,000 life-size soldiers made from terra cotta clay. Archeologists have discovered that these statues are over 2,000 years old.

"I couldn't believe it," said Norwest. "They were awesome."

On day six of her journey, Norwest visited the Great Wall of China. The Great Wall is over 4,000 miles long stretching from east to west of China and is also said to be over 2,000 years old.

"The Great Wall was really hard to climb," she said. "It's really steep."

Norwest is thankful to the people that made this trip possible. She is already considering attending next year's trip to Italy.

"This was an awesome experience," said Norwest. "I would highly recommend this program to anyone that gets the opportunity." ■

Photo by Nikki Norwest

College Counselor & Career Services Advisor Ready To Help

■ Trinity Minahan has turned her hopes of working here in Grand Ronde into a reality.

By Toby McClary

College Counselor & Career Services Advisor Trinity Minahan is doing her best to point high school students in the right direction.

Minahan went to Perrydale High School in Amity, Oregon where she graduated with a grade point average of 4.0. On a Rodeo Scholarship she received in high school, she attended Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho. She then transferred to Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton, Oregon where she received her associate's degree. In her junior year, she transferred to Western Oregon University and completed her bachelor's degree before finally graduating from George Fox University in April of 2005.

Shortly after her graduation, Minahan began working in the Education Department for the Tribe.

"I feel like a natural fit," said Minahan. "I've always loved the Education Department and the staff has been very welcoming."

Minahan has worked for the Tribe in the past taking on summer positions as the Recreation Intern and also getting a feel for the Education Department as the Educa-

tion Assistant. Despite her busy school schedule, Minahan wanted to spend her summers becoming familiar with the area that she hoped to find a career. It seems that Minahan is one that turned her hopes into a reality.

She now concentrates on finding students a direction after high school. Minahan explains that making a decision about schools and careers is not always easy, "especially just out of high school."

"Even after a decision has been made, there is still a lot of paperwork and scholarship information that needs to be filled out," she said. "That's what I am here for, to help the students from step one, all the way through."

Minahan also works with local schools setting up College Career Fairs and other events to make colleges from around the state more available to the students. She also works with school counselors and administrators to find out the drop-out rates and tries to find a way to better help those students that struggle.

"My main priority is to get in touch with local schools and local students," said Minahan. "The feel-

the Donghan Village.

"We had a hard time communicating," said Norwest. "They spoke very little English but everyone seemed really nice."

Norwest explained that the most in-



Photo by Toby McClary

ing I get when I help someone is empowering, I love it."

One of Minahan's ultimate goals is to have a career center to help inform Tribal members what is available and what fits best for each individual's skills and abilities.

"I've seen them in the past and they seem to be really successful," she said.

Minahan is a Siletz Tribal member and is the daughter of Siletz Tribal member Carlotta Hall and the granddaughter of Everett and Marguarite Lundy. She now re-

sides in Dallas, Oregon with her husband Nick and their three horses.

She is very active in the rodeo circuit and has been for most of her life. She has been barrel racing since she was six years old and explained that she found interest in it when she used to watch her sister, Gina Campbell, compete. In her senior year in high school, Minahan made it to the Silver State National Rodeo for barrel racing and was ranked in the top eight in the state of Oregon. She now spends her spare time training her three horses and getting them ready for future rodeo action.

Minahan has made a positive impact on the Education Department and her addition has been noticeable to her peers.

"Trinity is a wonderful role model to our youth," said Tribal member and former Education Division Manager Marion Mercier. "We were thrilled to have her apply here. She works so well with people of all ages and has been a huge asset to the Education Division," she said. "We are lucky to have her here." ■