



# Honors In Education

UMPQUA

MOLALLA

ROGUE RIVER

KALAPUYA

CHASTA



Photo by Justin Phillips

**Family Moment** — GED Graduate and Tribal member Lenard Lane (left) poses with his mother and father at the 2005 Honor & Recognition Dinner.

## Achieving A General Education Degree (GED) Is A Family Value

The Zimmers, Mom Penny and Daughter Cheyeanne, graduate this year together.

By Jack Ham, *Smoke Signals* Intern

In 1977, Tribal member Penny Zimmer dropped out of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade just three months before graduation. Although Zimmer dropped out she still believed in education very strongly. "Education should be top priority in any adult or child's life," she said.

Zimmer's need for achieving a GED started when she wanted to become a Technician II in the Housekeeping department. The

Technician II job requires a GED. Zimmer also wanted to get away from working the hours of 5 p.m. to midnight. "I would like a daytime job," she said.

These hours became tough on Zimmer when working and family time conflicted.

"The last two years I missed being with my daughters," she said. "It's hard, especially as a parent."

"It's like a family thing," said Zimmer referring to her brother, Tribal member Kenny Lafferty and her son, Tribal member Tim Grefsrud, who are on their way to receiving a GED. Zimmer thinks finishing school is important because of the good memories she shared from high school. Zimmer hopes these memories will influence her youngest daughter, Dakotajane Zimmer, to stay in school and graduate.

"I didn't get to go to my last prom, walk across the stage and shake the principal's hand," she said.

Over a process of 27 years, Zimmer worked without a GED but in a year of studying, Zimmer made her dream complete. "So that little dream was shot," she said.

Zimmer also believed her dream was possible because of the help of Adult Education Coordinator Joanne Carr.

"I can't say enough about her," said Carr.

"I don't know what the Tribe would do without her," said Zimmer. "She's a blessing."

"If (Carr) got her through her GED she must be amazing," said Zimmer's husband Joseph Zimmer

when he met Carr at the event.

But the excitement for the Zimmer family went beyond Penny achieving her GED this year. Daughter Cheyeanne, 16, dropped out of high school last year when she was a sophomore, but went back for her GED when her mom went back.

"We really did help each other a lot," she said. "We went over to Joanne Carr's office and worked together, too." As it turned out, each was strong in an area the other wasn't. Penny helped Cheyeanne with reading and Cheyeanne helped Penny with math.

On the night of June 18<sup>th</sup>, Zimmer and Cheyeanne were rewarded at the Honor and Recognition dinner for achieving the awaited GED.

"I knew I would do it one day," said Zimmer.

"I was really proud of her for doing it," said Cheyeanne.

Cheyeanne will be starting college classes through the Tribe in September.

The Zimmers are among other Tribal parent-child duos that are in the process of earning their GEDs together, according to Carr. ■



Penny Zimmer

Photo by Toby McClary