

# Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center Special Insert

It is often impossible to get a fresh look at an agency we all know so well, so in taking on the Tribal Health Clinic, we turned to three of our intrepid summer interns. Tribal members Jack Ham, Spencer Olson and photographer Rhiannon Wheeler took on the project with relish, divvying up the departments and choosing an egalitarian selection of employees from all levels. If only we could have them all year around, but alas, they were back at school before each of the departments were covered, so with great humility, our staff writer, Ron Karten, filled in some of the gaps, though not, of course, with the panache or style that only excited young interns can provide. Our thanks for their hard work.



## Medical Clinic

Serving Tribal members, other Indians and the local community, the Medical Clinic takes appointments and makes provisions for urgent care. With three doctors, one family nurse practitioner and three registered nurses, the facility provides comprehensive medical care including physical examinations, employee health maintenance, well-child exams, family planning and preventative services. As appropriate, the

clinic also refers patients to other departments within the clinic and to specialists in the surrounding communities.

The clinic serves Tribal members, Natives, and non-Natives. The services there are useful for everyone. And while it started out small, the clinic has become a facility that can give you the services you need. From dental work to vaccinations, the clinic is the place to go for healing. ■

## Optometry

In a room filled with frames and lenses is a man name Jasen Henderson, the Optometry Assistant in the Tribal clinic. On the job, Henderson works with Optometrist, Charlean White, to help patients with frame selections and adjustments.

Henderson has provided service to Tribal members for five years.

Henderson worked at Nanitch Sahallie (meaning to uplift or overcome) in Keizer, a Tribal drug and alcohol treatment facility that was closed four years ago. Further back, Henderson attended Concord Career Institute in Portland to become a certified lab technician, certified medical assistant and x-ray technician. For the last six months, he has been at his job in the Tribal clinic.

"I realized at a young age, life isn't a joke," said Henderson. He described



Jasen Henderson

growing up in Las Vegas, Nevada and realizing the importance of his future. "I learned when you make a mistake, just be honest," said Henderson. He referred to an incident where he accidentally broke a frame he was adjusting for a patient. Henderson also learned from this incident to warm the frames before bending them, and to have patience.

When Henderson is away from offering care to Tribal members, he enjoys riding his dirt bike and spending time with his wife, Hope, and daughter, Annastasia. "Honestly, without my family's support I wouldn't be here," said Henderson. "We believe in the importance of being a unit."

In the future, Henderson plans to continue providing quality service to the Tribe. "I take a lot of pride in my work," said Henderson backing up his belief on being patient, passionate and attentive with his patients. "The reward of my job is helping people." ■

## Administration – Michael Watkins, Executive Health Director

The clinic started out dealing with emergency situations and emergency care. However, today the clinic not only deals with emergency care, but is moving towards prevention.

The clinic includes several departments including the Administrative office, the Behavioral Health department, the Business office, the Medical department, the Pharmacy, Wellness, Physical Medicine and Dentistry.

The man in charge of the clinic is Michael Watkins, the Health Executive Director. Watkins has been working at the clinic for about four years, but he wasn't always the director. He came into the job as an administrator. His original job was to handle the financial aspects of the clinic, but when the job opportunity came up for the head of the clinic, he took it. The



Michael Watkins

purpose of the administrative office is to deal with day to day and long term health issues. ■

## Dentistry

Today, the Dental department runs smoothly with Dentist Anthony Lucio (*Maidu/Zuni/Cherokee/Choctaw*). After hours, a patient here and there may lose a tooth which is eventually fixed. "Everything runs pretty smooth," said Lucio.

A normal day on the job consist of exams, treatment plans, basic fillings, denture cases and checking for cavities. Before, working these jobs, Lucio volunteered in a dental clinic during his college days and found his interest in being a dentist. "I liked it, it made me go in that direction," said Lucio. His schooling for the job lasted eight years.

When there are patients who

fear visiting the dentist, Lucio does his best to talk to them. "Those are the ones you have to educate," said Lucio. To take on these tasks, good communication skills are required to learn what the patient needs.

"Understand the patient's point of view," said Lucio.

When Lucio is away from checking the mouths of patients, he enjoys fishing, camping, playing golf and having a relaxing weekend.

Lucio and the Dentistry department share goals for the future: to do the best work they can for Tribal members and patients. "Try to develop better programs," said Lucio, referring to ways

of promoting good oral hygiene because good oral hygiene helps promote good overall health. ■



Anthony Lucio