

Tribe, Community Continue To Learn How To Cope With Meth Use

■ One of the problems of dealing with meth use is that recovery time for an addict is five times longer than the longest available treatment.

By Ron Karten

There is no medicine, no therapy for children who are born addicted to methamphetamines, said Jim Lacey, M.D., a Salem pediatrician. At a community meeting held in the Tribal Community Center on Wednesday, April 26, Lacey addressed the tragedies that meth abuse can bring into the home.

"We don't have any good medications to help babies withdraw," he said. "They have to go through withdrawal by themselves."

"We still don't know what will happen to these babies when they grow up," he added, although "studies are starting."

Lacey is a member of the Meth Task Force for the Oregon Medical Association. As seriously as he takes meth addiction, he also has a sense of humor about his health care efforts: he works with a physicians' group called, CHAOS (Child Health Association of Salem).

While the difficulties of working with meth-troubled individuals is well-known, the details of the epidemic bear repeating: that 90 percent of kids taken out of homes are taken out because meth use has created unsafe situations within the home; that 95 percent of ID theft cases are traced back to meth users.

The more difficult issues of treatment and incarceration also came up during the meeting.

Tribal Council member Kathleen Tom asked what the Tribe is doing to provide addicts with long



Photo by Ron Karten

Community Interest — With Dr. Jim Lacey at right, community members watched a Powerpoint presentation during the meth meeting.

term treatment.

"It's a double-edged sword," said Tribal Social Services Manager Dave Fullerton. While medical and social service practitioners believe that "it takes five years to get clean," said Fullerton, current federal law allows only 12 months for parents to clean up once their children are taken from the home for foster care. If parents are showing progress, the timeline can be extended. Normally, though, after 12 months, courts are required to make permanent placements for the children.

"It's a huge problem for parents," said Fullerton, particularly because "the relapse is part of the recovery." The average addict has six to nine relapses on the way to recovery, he said.

The Tribe has transitional housing in McMinnville and Portland, and "ultimately, we will have one here in Grand Ronde," said Fullerton. But the average treatment course is only six to eight months. "There are very few statewide facilities that provide longer treatment.

"The Siletz Tribe," he said, "just opened a facility for mothers with children. It's a recovery house, similar to what we will have here in GR. From treatment into a community house. It has shown success because it doesn't put you back in the community you left, and provides support for you. You're still in a structured environment."

"Conventional treatment for alcohol has not proved successful with meth," said Fullerton. The alcohol standard treatment allows 21 days for recovery. "The only thing showing any light at end of the tunnel for meth are the treatment methods used for cocaine addicts."

The Tribes recently hired Joe Martineau (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Fond du Lac Band) as its Meth Treatment Coordinator for the Tribe's local program. (See story below) "We got funded through an ANA (Administration for Native Americans) grant to provide post treatment services which may include a recovery or transition housing in Grand Ronde," Martineau said. "We would be looking to move forward with that in August." ■

The Wisdom Of Three Elders Brought Healing To Joe Martineau

■ "Finding my identity" was key to his own recovery.

By Ron Karten

Joe Martineau, a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Fond du Lac Band, is Post Treatment Services Coordinator for the Tribe's upcoming meth treatment facility.

His role will be to work with newly hired counselor Chris Holiday in a program that provides extended services for Tribal members recovering from meth addiction.

"After my own recovery I made a commitment to give back and work within the helping field," said Martineau, now in his 19th year of recovery.

"The key to my recovery," he said, "was finding my identity

and incorporating my culture into my recovery program. The Native American healing aspect of my recovery is what saved me.

"During my treatment I was lucky enough to meet three different Native American healers."

"When I went through, and started searching, I found a lot of walls that came up. People were telling me what I was doing was wrong, a lot of fear-based teachings. That

scared me from looking further into my culture. These three Elders helped me look at things without fear and brought me through ceremonies and helped me incorporate Native American healing into my 12-step program.

"After a lot of years, I became one of the helpers and teachers that helped me. That made

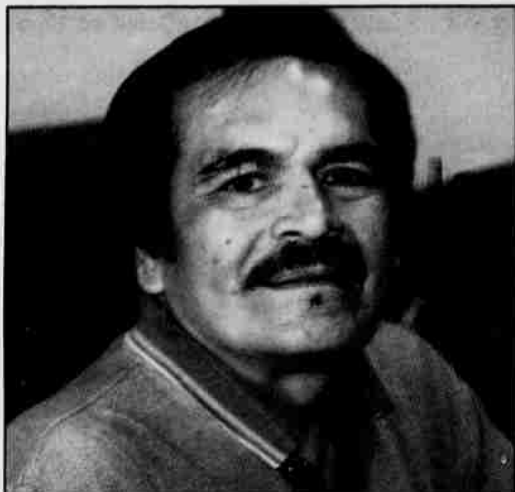


Photo by Ron Karten

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"The thing that I think will help the children the most through our culture, is to instill in them cultural values to strengthen family, because family is most important."

~ Joe Martineau, Post Treatment Services Coordinator

my identity even stronger.

Today, I believe that it's so important to mix our Native American healing and culture into our healing program.

Martineau has worked within the Minnesota Native American community in many different programs as a counselor and cultural resource person.

Although he has never done meth ("Meth wasn't a popular drug when I quit," he said), I have an addictive

personality." Before he quit, he said, he was addicted to both alcohol and other drugs. His father was killed in 1960 in an alcohol-related car accident, and the week before he moved to Grand Ronde, he lost a niece and a nephew to overdoses.

"Our children need a future," he said, "and they need as many of us to understand and not condemn them."

"All children are susceptible to

and help them. I believe that our children are our future and this is a really powerful problem we are facing with meth. It can permanently damage these people's brains in the future."

Martineau comes from a large family back home in Minnesota. He spent 13 years in non-Indian foster homes before the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act that has tried to see that Native children

receive Native foster care placements when possible.

"My identity and self-esteem were gone when I returned to the reservation. I turned to drinking and drugs until I went into

treatment and got help. The greatest part of my help was finding my identity and where I fit in."

Martineau has two daughters in college in Minnesota, and, he said, "Both doing very well."

While the program continues to look for a recovery house in the area, Martineau is busy now contracting bed space for people who might need help right now, as well as helping with counseling and referring.

For those in need, contact Martineau at 503-879-1690. ■