

## Grand Ronde Community Rallies To Raise Money For Tribal Member

By Angie Sears

A group of Grand Ronde community members have rallied together to raise money for Tribal member Jackie Whisler, who is suffering from a life threatening illness.

Whisler, a long-time resident of Lincoln City, OR, has been battling cancer for more than a year. She has been an active member of the Grand Ronde community most of her life; in fact, she played a key role in the restoration of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. Last July, her illness forced her to leave her position as a language specialist with the Tribe.

A group of her friends, family, co-workers, and community members have come together to hold a series of fundraisers to help with the cost of treatment and travel expenses. She is currently undergoing rigorous chemotherapy treatments in Lincoln City, but there is a chance the family will be considering alternative treatment at a facility in Washington state.


On Saturday, June 30, at 3:00 p.m. the group will be holding a silent auction, with a benefit concert and BBQ dinner at the tribal gym. The concert will feature performances from Native American Flutist Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach and Native American Flutist/Guitarist Tim Yett.

The doors will open at 3:00 p.m. and bidding will begin at 3:30 p.m., with dinner and concert to follow at 4:30 p.m. There is a minimum donation of \$10.00 per person. Tickets go on sale Monday, May 14 at 8:00 a.m. To purchase tickets please contact Angela Sears at 503-879-1961 or inquire via e-mail at [angela.sears@grandronde.org](mailto:angela.sears@grandronde.org)

For anyone who can not attend the silent auction / benefit concert, but would like to make a donation you can do so at any Bank of America branch. An account has been set up under the "Jackie Whisler Medical Fund."

JW Benefit Concert  
silent auction  
and BBQ dinner  
Tribal Gym  
Jan Michael Looking Wolf  
Reibach & Tim Yett  
**Saturday June 30, 2007**  
**3:00 pm**

We are asking for a minimum donation  
of \$10.00 per plate



for more information contact  
**Angie Sears**  
503 879 1961

Ad created by George Valdez

## Where are they now: A Glimpse At The Success Of The 2002-2003 Hatfield Fellow

By Angie Sears

Kevin Simmons, 2002-2003 Hatfield Fellow and Grand Ronde Tribal member, went to work on Capitol Hill in Congressman David Wu's office, but soon decided that learning the ropes in a congressional office was not exactly what he was looking for in his fellowship experience. He wanted to gain a more direct experience with American Indians in the legislative process.

Simmons, believing there was no better place to gain this experience than the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), approached a NCAI representative and asked if there was room for him to serve the remainder of his fellowship learning from them.

"As the community fund director, I had the pleasure of directly overseeing Kevin's fellowship in Washington, DC. He came to the program with his own set of expectations and left with a better grasp of the legislative process and of his own career goals. Kevin did an excellent job representing Oregon and teaching staff members about the unique nature of the Tribes of Oregon," said Angie Blackwell, Tribal Council Vice Chair. "People that are not directly associated with a Tribe often lump us all into one category, assuming our needs and concerns are all the same, but Kevin helped staff members realize that this is not the case."

"Because of the great deal of support I received from people like Angie Blackwell, I was able to make a smooth transition from Congressman Wu's office to NCAI," said Simmons. "Angie was a key support person for me when I was in D.C. She really helped me a lot throughout my fellowship."

Simmons, who has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Native American Studies from Humboldt State University and is currently working toward a Masters degree in Education, thought it was only natural that he go on to learn about Ameri-

can Indian law. In fact, he believes it is fate that sent him to work at NCAI during his fellowship.

"It really did work out for the best... My Hatfield Fellowship experience was probably about the best experience that any Fellow could have when it comes to dealing with Tribal issues," he said. "NCAI deals with all of the big Tribal issues."

During his Fellowship with NCAI, Simmons worked with trust reform issues, and researched anti-sovereignty groups. He was responsible for working with Tribal leaders to identify

these groups and determine what their focus was, where they were located, and which Tribes should be concerned about them.

One of the projects he felt fortunate to work on was a Supreme Court case between Inyo County and the Bishop Paiute Tribe. He was responsible for collecting information about cooperative law agreements from Tribes across the country to prove to the courts that these types of cooperative agreements were common.

Simmons felt that his Hatfield experience was different from the experiences of the other Fellows. He commented that he was impressed with the accomplishments of many of the previous Fellows, and said that they had clearly utilized their fellowship as a spring board for their careers. He felt that he had used his experiences as a spring board as well, but not in the same direction.

"I really do consider my experience as being uniquely Indian," said Simmons. "One of the most important experiences for me was walking into the general assembly of the NCAI Legislative Summit and seeing a huge diversity of American Indians working at various levels.



Tribal member Kevin Simmons

Photo by Peta Tinda

It was amazing to see. There were Indian professionals like Alyssa Macy, who is really tied to Indian Country but not necessarily in the Tribal sector, and there were Tribal leaders who are directly tied to it. There were journalists and other professionals who work in Indian Country... Seeing that vast array of Tribal people really opened my eyes to see that I don't necessarily have to work in the Tribal sector. I can do the work that I do, and still give back to the community."

After the fellowship, Simmons returned to Humboldt County, California. His wife had family there, and he had been offered a job on the Hoopa Valley Reservation working in the Education Department. He accepted the position because he saw it as an opportunity to work next to Lyle Marshall, a great Tribal leader who was pushing some large trust reform issues.

Currently, he is working at Hum-

boldt State University as an education of opportunities program advisor, and is providing direct service to both Indian and non-Indian students.

Simmons also runs youth workshops, and has been working on developing initiatives to determine how the California university system can better serve American Indian students. He recently coordinated a Tribal Leader's Education Summit that he hosted on campus. The summit allowed Tribal leaders to meet with the president of Humboldt State University, as well as representatives of California State University and University of California.

This is more of a consultant position for Simmons and is not directly related to his current position with the university. He said he does this because it helps to graduate American Indian students.

"I also conduct a youth workshop called Success in Both Worlds. It teaches Native youth to walk in two worlds. It helps them to better understand how to be an American Indian and maintain your Tribal values, while incorporating your culture, your religion, and your spirituality into an institution of higher learning, career, or anything else that has potential to strip those things away from you," said Simmons.

He values the experience he gained in his Fellowship and acknowledges that it was this experience that has enabled him to do the things he is doing today. However, he would like to see future Fellows get more direct experience with Native issues and spend some time working with NCAI or The National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA).

"The Fellowship really was an important experience for me; it allowed me to have direct access to some of the greatest Tribal leaders to have ever walked this land," he said. ■