

Tribal youth do well in fire safety poster contest

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Four Tribal children won three second places and one third place in the AMERIND Risk Management Corp.'s 2008 regional contest of the 2008 National Fire and Home Safety Poster Contest.

The contest is designed for children in kindergarten through eighth grades and the posters had to illustrate a fire safety theme.

In the kindergarten through third-grade category, Promise Rimer took second place and Tahoma Johnson finished third.

In the fourth- through sixth-grade competition, Cecely Welin took second, Amanda Grijalva took second in the seventh- and eighth-grade category.

"Unfortunately, we did not win a first place, so we will not have a Grand Ronde entry in the national contest," said Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority Director Carina Ginter. "But our kids sure did a great job and are to be commended."

First place in all three categories went to entrants from Spokane. ■



1 — Tahoma Johnson, 2 — Promise Rimer
3 — Amanda Grijalva, 4 — Cecely Welin

House keeps out bad influences

RECOVERY continued from front page

held at the Tribal Community Center on the last Thursday of every month and at the Tribe's Recovery House, a local home where men in recovery can live for a time to learn the practices of success and avoid the daily traps of addiction.

For Tribal member William, 37, one of three currently living in the Recovery House, it's a matter of getting away from old influences.

"Me and all my brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and cousins have had problems (with substance abuse)," he said. "It has been going on since my childhood, and it's still going on. They want me to come home, but it's not a good place for me now."

Serving community members from 14 through the ages of Elders, the group has grown quickly. "It's been growing, from the first meetings when we had six to eight," Martineau said.

The larger groups make the program "more of a fellowship," Martineau said.

Contacts for Recovery House services

For those who might want to look into Recovery House services for themselves, friend or family, contact Joe Martineau at 503-879-1690 or Chris Holliday at 503-879-1452.

"It calls for people to stay closer to their commitment to recovery," Martineau said. "Over the past two years, a lot have been coming consistently, making it a real good fellowship."

The group welcomes all, whether with an addiction or without. "You might not be addicted to anything," Martineau said, "but family members might be."

Martineau said that Tribal and community members not otherwise involved in the program, including Laura Gleason and Charlie, Kenny and Rex Haller, attend regularly. They were on hand for the two-year celebration, with Rex strumming and singing a gospel song, "Angels With No Haloes," for the group.

Tribal members Travis Stewart and Bobby Mercier also get involved as support, Martineau said, particularly with the sweat lodge located

behind the Recovery House.

Pursuing the idea that the larger the community of support, the better, Martineau also has drawn in local recovery groups, including Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous. He is working to bring in the local Gamblers Anonymous group as well.

"Tribal Council members have come to our recovery meetings and been supportive," Martineau said. "The cooks at the Community Center have donated their time."

"The unique part of what we try to do is include history and culture into the recovery program."

A sweat lodge and cultural teachings around activities like carving help with the recovery part, he said.

"Residents really like that carving. We sit and carve, and different community members come in and talk about (carving) styles and where they come from and things unique to the Tribe here."

"And we encourage the guys to get involved outside of our meetings. They help with all of the events here at the Tribe, with cleanup and all sorts of things."

Similar to traditional AA meetings, Tribal community recovery meetings include members sharing their stories of recovery. "They say how they're doing and how they've found recovery in their lives," Martineau said.

Elders also are invited to speak to the group about their experiences.

The group is generous in honoring success. "We've given out a pin for more than 30 years in recovery and a one-day pin," Martineau said.

The Tribal Recovery House has treated more than 20 people in the last 18 months. Half or more are still in recovery, still attending meetings.

The recovery picture is making strides across Indian Country.

"It's so good to see similarities (in recovery programs) across Indian Country, and to see such pride in

what Grand Ronde is as a Tribe," Martineau said.

After a community dinner, the two-year celebration hosted a special guest from the Grand Ronde campus to tell his story of addiction and recovery.

"You don't have to wait for miracles from God," Martineau said. "Just look back in your life and try to explain why you're still here."

And then it was time to give out awards for staying sober.

In his 18 years in the recovery business, Martineau described one vital lesson: "Once a person gets up in their community and publicly acknowledges their addiction, recovery is much easier."

Meanwhile, back at the Recovery House, William is alone for the time being while his roommates take care of personal business, but their absence does not stop him from singing their praises.

"My roommates are very nice guys," he said. "They're courteous and helpful. We all want to make this place work."

The place is spotless inside, even a little spare of decoration, and William emphasized how everybody works to keep the place clean and neat, and how the next project for the week is to trim the lawn.

He talks of his stepfather — also a man in recovery — as his hero.

"He turned his life around and, since, he has been strong and supportive," William said. "He's completely and totally a different person. He helped me to want to maintain my recovery. He took me to meetings and listened when I had a problem."

William dreams of being a writer, a result of his daily journaling, or maybe a drug and alcohol counselor because he works so well with people, but he sees his next steps as moving into Tribal housing and getting back one of his old jobs at the casino.

"I left on good terms," he said, "to improve my life."

Last week, William was on the front porch with a broom, taking care of business. He is not giving up.

"I went to treatment four times," Martineau said, "so I encourage people to never give up." ■

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