

Casino, hospital team up for Holiday Toy Drive

By Angela Sears

Spirit Mountain Casino Marketing Coordinator

Spirit Mountain Casino and Doernbecher Children's Hospital are holding a holiday toy drive to provide gifts for children at Christmas.

Spirit Mountain will give \$10 in free slot play for every unwrapped toy brought into the Coyote Club desk until Dec. 20 with a \$30 maximum in bonus play per person. Donations will go directly to Doernbecher Children's Hospital in Portland.

"The holidays bring out the best in people," said Tribal member James Buxman, Public Relations & Advertising Manager at Spirit Mountain Casino. "That is why Spirit Mountain is excited to partner with the community and bring smiles to the faces of children, especially when times can be stressful."

"Everyone deserves to experience holiday cheer and we are proud to help make that happen."

Oregon Health Sciences University's Doernbecher Children's Hospital is a world-class facility that cares for tens of thousands of children annually from the Pacific Northwest and around the United States, as well as international referrals for specialty care.

Children have access to a full range of pediatric care, which results in more than 120,000 outpatient visits, discharges, surgeries and pediatric transports annually.

In addition, Doernbecher patients receive cancer treatment, specialized neurology care and sophisticated heart surgery in the patient- and family-centered environment. Pediatric experts from Doernbecher travel throughout Oregon and southwest Washington to provide specialty care to about 2,800 children at more than 54 outreach clinics in 13 locations.

The casino, which opened in October 1995, is a business enterprise of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and offers Nevada-style slots, blackjack, craps, roulette, poker, pai gow, keno and bingo throughout its 90,000-square-foot casino. ■

Youth Canoe Club

Every Wednesday 4-5 p.m., Youth Education Building

Contact Lisa Leno at 503-879-1471 or Travis Mercier at 503-879-2143 for more information.

Per capita distribution date: Wednesday, Dec. 17

Members are not required to do anything to receive this quarter's per capita distribution. However, anyone wanting to change their address should call Hollie Mercier at 503-879-2490 or 1-800-422-0232, ext. 2490. In addition, anyone wanting to change their tax deductions, transfer funds to the adult savings plan or add/cancel direct deposit, call for the forms. Forms can be faxed directly to Wendy Coleman at RedW at 505-998-3442 or to CTGR at 503-879-2480. Forms also can be downloaded from the Grand Ronde Tribal Web site Tribal members secure page. If you do not have access to this secure page, please contact the Tribe's I.S. help desk at 503-879-2122.

If you do not have direct deposit, you can pick up your check at the Tribal gymnasium. Checks will be handed out at the Tribal gym on Dec. 17 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tribal members will only be allowed to pick up their own checks. If you choose not to pick up your check, they will be mailed to the most current address on file at the Tribe. If you would like to verify your address or need to make changes, contact Hollie Mercier at 1-800-422-0232, ext. 2490, or 503-879-2490. ■

2009 Tribal Marketplace dates

- Jan. 3 & 4
- Feb. 7 & 8
- March 7 & 8
- April 4 & 5
- May 2 & 3
- June 6 & 7
- July 4 & 5
- (Possibly 7/3 for the three-day holiday weekend)
- Aug. 1 & 2
- Sept. 5 & 6
- Oct. 3 & 4
- Nov. 7 & 8
- Dec. 5 & 6

Dates subject to change due to conflicting Tribal or SMC events. Located across from Cedar Plank Buffet.



'You sleep with one eye open'

SISTERS OF THE ROAD
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and drugs, 22 years free of alcohol and six months free of drugs, he says. He has been a customer of Sisters of the Road since 2003.

Ben says that he doesn't have contact with his family "by choice," and many say that abuse, neglect or just plain broken families are probably part of the background that everyone brings to Sisters of the Road.

Others say that mental illness is the common denominator.

Addiction is another one.

"Half," Ben says, "are veterans."

"The fastest growing segment of homeless are families with children," says Beemer.

Thompson says that when on the street at night, he stays under bridges, overpasses, in doorways, the parking lot of his church in his car, at the waterfront, in the "punch bowl" near the Steel Bridge.

"It gives you shelter from the rain and weather."

And, of course, everybody couch surfs when possible.

They talk about the streets where almost all have spent nights in fear or respect for the seriousness of the situation. They also express lesser degrees of pride about the street family that sometimes develops.

"You sleep with one eye open," Ben says. "There is camaraderie



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Arthur Rios, a part-time oncall floor manager for Sisters of the Road Café, pets customer Perry's dog at the Portland nonprofit on Friday, Dec. 5.

on the streets, and sometimes you become more like a family, but you are even on the lookout with family members. They take stuff."

"I've been stabbed, shot at, beat up," Rios says. "I have a small tumor (from the abuse) in the back of my head."

"I watched a lot of people I loved

die of addictions, drugs, disease," Thompson says. "They're here one moment and gone the next. It's bad stuff out there."

"People who are homeless," Beemer says, "can lose a lot of weight from shivering in the winter. That's one reason our corn bread has so much butter in it."

"You have to watch not just for other homeless," Ben says, "but for the police, too. From what I've seen, they smack people around to get them to leave. I have friends that have been ticketed for trespassing when all they wanted was a place to sleep."

"It's like we're on a pingpong table," Rios says. "People are moved from southeast to southwest and then from southwest to southeast."

"It's bureaucratic policy as usual," Thompson says. "The city's reputation is more important than we are. It's frustrating. It's a hard way to live."

"One of the suggestions I had is for politicians to spend a few weeks on the street," Ben says.

A bunch of Sisters of the Road customers have cell phones. They don't have a lot of money, but, Beemer says, "I think it's really important to stay in touch. It helps them meet their basic needs and also not lose touch with their people."

"A lot are on disability," Beemer says. "Most work, too, and (a cell phone is) a pretty high priority."

Then, somebody was calling Ben on his cell phone.

He stands up.

"One of my street kids needs to go to the hospital," he says, and leaves.

In minutes, an ambulance is in the street in front of the Sisters of the Road Café. ■