

Angie Blackwell continues to serve

Former Tribal Council member keys in on helping children, stepfamilies

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

It is already almost three years since Tribal member Angie Blackwell joined the board of Children First for Oregon, the Portland-based non-profit.

Children First puts together an annual report card detailing how the state is doing on children's issues, like homelessness and hunger, education and social services, and lobbies the state Legislature to pass laws that support children's issues.

"My particular interest," says Blackwell, a former Tribal Council member (2004-07) and former Spirit Mountain Community Fund director, "is improving foster care outcomes. That's a very big issue for our group."

With Blackwell's background in early childhood education, philanthropy and leadership, many non-profits have asked her to serve on their boards.

"I turned down a bunch because of the huge time commitment," she says, "but I'm really committed to Children First. These issues are really important to me."

When the state Legislature is in session, Children First is there helping to develop policies and re-focus legislation on specific aspects of childhood welfare, she says.

In particular, Children First is seeking legislation this year to improve family economic stability by maintaining subsidies for day care and family housing, among others.

The group is optimistic this year about its longtime efforts to ensure health care for all of Oregon's children.

"We're close now on HB 2116," she says.

The most recent Children First Report Card for 2008 gives Oregon

an overall grade of D. The state gets a D minus for Early Care and Education, and an F for overall Health.

"We have some pretty big goals," she says. "It seems like we aren't making much progress in some areas, but the target that we measure against, the vision of what child welfare should be, is very high. The grade represents where we are compared with the ideal. We are making progress."

There's more information about the group's work, and county-by-county comparisons, at its Web site www.cffo.org.

"(The county data book) is really important when making recommendations for children and families. I used to use that book when I was running the Community Fund to compare the data with assertions made in grant applications," Blackwell says.

The Community Fund has long been a supporter of Children First. Since 2003, the Community Fund has contributed \$110,000 to the group; most recently this year, a \$25,000 grant for Children First's Fostering Success initiative.

Last summer, Blackwell, 41, started her own business, neatly related to her work at Children First and to her personal experience.

Blackwell Family Resources helps remarried parents create harmonious stepfamilies. With stepchildren of her own, Blackwell is a natural for this kind of consulting work.

Selling her services is "mostly word of mouth," she says. Sometimes clients find her on the Internet at www.blackwellfamilyresources.com "because they're desperate for help."

"Two of three stepfamilies don't make it," she says. "Divorced parents often remarry within the first five years and then divorce within the next five, making it difficult for children to establish healthy bonds."

"The key to success is developing realistic expectations." A time



File photo

Angie Blackwell

frame of three to five years is not too long, she says. "It's a matter of parents getting on the same page in terms of values. There's a lot of work that should go into making the family work. It's a time for parents to really sit down and look at their own idiosyncrasies and merge their expectations."

On the way to starting this business, Blackwell earned her certificate as a "life coach," specializing in fam-

ily and relationships. The program, from the Australia-based International Coach Academy, included 300 hours of training and 60 hours of supervised practicum. It focused on how to help people develop their own solutions through interpersonal skills and communication.

"Sometimes people need support and assistance figuring out how to go about doing things. That's what a coach does," she says.

Blackwell is married with five children (two of them stepchildren) and two grandchildren and number three on the way. The family likes the outdoors. Each summer they go camping and sometimes she and husband Darren go on "Jeep runs" with friends.

Will she ever run for Tribal Council again?

"Never say never," she says. "At this point, I don't have any plans to run for council, but I'm not ruling it out either. In any case, I will continue to advocate for fair and transparent government of the Tribe."

To learn more about any of her services, contact Blackwell at angie@blackwellfamilyresources.com. ■

Support group starts

The Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority sponsors a Financial Wellness support group that meets weekly at 5:30 p.m. Thursday in the Housing Authority conference room. The support group discusses, shares and learns ways to stretch dollars and protect the money participant's make. The group is informal and decides on the topic to be discussed and researched each week.

The Housing Authority has computers and worksheets to help people develop and track spending plans.

For more information, call Deborah Kroeker at 503-879-4522 or send her an e-mail at deborah.kroeker@grandronde.org. ■

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Notice to Interested Persons

Request for Proposals

Cleaning and Detailing of Tribal Vehicles For The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Procurement Department

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is requesting proposals for the interior and exterior cleaning and detailing of Tribally owned and leased vehicles. The vehicle cleaning and detailing is required to be performed on weekends at the Tribal headquarters and completed by 8 a.m. on the following Monday.

Interested persons wishing to be considered for the above work, please request a proposal packet from:

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Procurement Department
9615 Grand Ronde Road
Grand Ronde, OR 97347
503-879-2216

Proposals must be received at the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Procurement Department before 4 p.m. May 18, 2009. Proposals must be received by the established deadline. Those received after the deadline will not be considered. Proposals submitted by fax will not be accepted.

All proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope labeled "Response to RFP for Cleaning and Detailing of Tribal Vehicles."

The Tribe reserves the right to select the proposal(s) that are in the best interest of the Tribe. The Tribe also reserves the right to reject and/or all proposals, if such action is deemed to be in the best interest of the Tribe.

Proposal packets and additional information regarding this RFP may be obtained by contacting Kevin Mueller (Procurement Supervisor) at 503-879-4548 or Larry Leith (Procurement Manager) at 503-879-2216.

New!

Home Energy Efficiency Program

The Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority's new TEEPEI program provides energy education services, and funding for home energy saving projects, and home energy-generation projects

Enrolled Tribal members living in Polk, Yamhill, Marion, Multnomah, Tillamook and Washington counties may apply for the energy project funding.

All Tribal members are eligible for the free Energy Saving Kit, available soon!

If you are interested in:

- Making your home more energy efficient
- Lowering your monthly utility costs
- Replacing appliances with energy efficient ones
- Using alternative sources of energy to heat and cool your home

Then we want to hear from you!

To receive an application packet, and learn more, phone us at (800) 422-0232, x 2445.

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