

Community Fund helps create documentary

Native arts show debuts on OPB on Nov. 25

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Oregon Public Broadcasting, in association with Painted Sky, will premiere a new performing arts documentary, "For the Generations: Native American Story & Performance," on OPB at 10:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 25.

A grant from the Grand Ronde Tribe's Spirit Mountain Community Fund, in part, made the documentary possible.

"As a Tribal foundation, it is an honor to partner with Painted Sky and other funders to promote Native American arts and culture. As a terminated Tribe, we know the value of honoring our culture to perpetuate our Tribal history," said Tribal member and Fund Director Shelley Hanson.

Artists profiled in the documentary include pop-diva and "Urban Indian" Jana Mashonee; classically trained ballet dancers Michael Greyeyes and Santee Smith; Grammy Award winners Robert Mirabal and Bill Miller; funky R&B songstress Martha Redbone; Painted Sky's own Northstar dancers and a host of others.

"You will be surprised by these performers," said OPB's Sean Hutchinson, who produced the documentary. "Though they all weave their Tribal heritage in and out of their music and dance, their performances have appeal that extends beyond what might be too easily classified as 'Native-American' music."

Part performance, part behind-the-scenes footage and interviews, the documentary profiles the personal stories of the artists in their own words — weaving a narrative through the performances that lends grit and personality to the artistry showcased.

The documentary travels to locations across the country and in Canada to capture the artists'



Photo courtesy of OPB

Tribal member Shelley Hanson, Spirit Mountain Community Fund director, presents OPB's Vice President of Local Production Jeff Douglas with a check in support of "For the Generations: Native American Story and Performance." Pictured, from left to right, are Painted Sky dancer Isaac Trimble, choreographer Lorena Aranda, dancer Mary Bodine, Hanson, Community Fund Program Officer Louis King, Douglas, producer Sean Hutchinson, Painted Sky dancer Willie Sittinghorse Kirk, choreographer Damon Keller and dancer Rebecca Payne Friedlander.

performances. "For the Generations" will be released to a national audience of public broadcasting affiliates in spring 2010.

"Thanks to OPB and the other sponsors for providing an opportunity for a national audience to experience Native music, while getting a glimpse of the life and times of our artists," said Arlie Neskahi, co-president of Painted Sky Inc., Navajo Nation.

Much of the focus of the documentary centers on the outreach performers do and their work with Native youth.

"A person like Jana really shines a light on a pathway to success and

presents a model for kids by which they might become an artist or doctor or astronaut — whatever they can conceive for themselves — and not be daunted by some bleak odds," Hutchinson said.

An examination of those challenges facing American Indians on and off the reservation include health and fitness issues such as diabetes, alcoholism and suicide.

Artist Bill Miller reveals the healing that music has brought to his life as he returns to his alma mater at the University of Wisconsin-La-Crosse to debut his latest release.

"I've been through so much trauma in my life, I need to move on too. And I took this music, not knowing where it would go, but now I see

the effect. It's a very healing piece of music," he said.

Portland's Regional Arts and Culture Council provided additional funding.

The program will air again on OPB at 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 29.

Additional support was provided by the University of Oregon, Portland State University's Native American and Student and Community Center, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, the Native American Youth & Family Center, the Native American Music Awards and the American Indian College Fund.

The city of Portland and state of Oregon also have endorsed the project. ■

Chinook visit



Photo by Dean Rhodes

Chinook Tribal Vice Chairman Sam Robinson, seated left, and Chairman Ray Gardner visited the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde on Friday, Nov. 6, to discuss issues of mutual interest, including the Chinook Tribe's quest for federal recognition. Grand Ronde Tribal members who visited with them included, on right side from left, Wink Soderberg, Steve Bobb Sr. and Chris Mercier.

Christmas tree contest

The Elders' Activity Center is looking for teams to decorate a Christmas tree.

Voting will be conducted by people who come into the Elders' Activity Center. Prizes will be \$100 for first place, \$75 for second place and \$50 for third place.

The trees then will be sold by silent auction.

Decorating will begin at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 6.

Call Elder Activity Assistant Daniel Ham at 503-879-2233 to sign up your team or call Tribal Elder Louise Medeiros at 503-879-4312 for more information. ■

Recycle center moves

The Recycle Center has been moved temporarily to 9675 Grand Ronde Road. (The Curl Property next to Procurement). We will leave it open every day, as long as there isn't any personal garbage or other materials (couches, mattresses, etc.) dumped there. We need everyone to take only recyclable items to the center. **THE RECYCLE CENTER IS NOT A DUMP.** Thank you for doing your part to keep this service available to our community. For more information, contact Tribal Facilities Manager Michael J. Larsen at 503-879-2407. ■