

Community Resource Fair slated

The Grand Ronde Community Awareness Team is sponsoring a Community Resource Fair at the Tribal gym at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 20.

As part of April being National Child Abuse Awareness Month, the team has invited speaker Jacob Flores, who will conduct a community presentation on "Healing Our Community: Building Relationships on Love and Trust."

Flores has a master's degree in counseling and psychology from the University of Arizona in Tucson and 25 years of experience in public schools and community colleges.

The fair also will provide information from Polk and Yamhill counties, the Tribe, local school districts and more.

Dinner and child care will be provided.

To reserve a table, contact Tribal Indian Child Welfare Prevention Caseworker Carmen Mercier at 503-879-1646 or Carmen.mercier@grandronde.org. ■

2010 Tribal Marketplace dates

- May 7-8, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; May 9, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- June 4-5, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; June 6, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Aug. 6-7, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Aug. 8, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Aug. 20-22, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. — Powwow
- Sept. 3-4, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sept. 5, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Dates subject to change due to conflicting Tribal or SMC events. Located across from Cedar Plank Buffet. For more information, contact Buzz Simmons at 971-226-9799.

Youth excited to have Saddle Club

SADDLE CLUB continued
from front page

for anyone in the community to work with horses as a way of learning new skills, and for a community without all that many opportunities for the young.

"I just think this is a wonderful way to bring recreation to youth and their families," said Tribal Council member Val Sheker, an early supporter of the idea. "I think, as a whole, our youth out here are just wanting some recreation."

"When I talked to (local youth) about a Saddle Club, they were very excited. The Tribal Council has been trying to set up a Boys and Girls Club for years to provide that outlet for youth."

"I believe this is going to be a wonderful opportunity for our Tribal youth and community," said Tribal member and Youth Prevention Specialist Lisa Leno.

"We need to offer a program that is more fun than what they now get from drugs or alcohol or gangs," said Folden.

He knows all about the lures and dodges of that life. In 2000-03, he worked at the Bridgeway drug and alcohol program for adults. Before that, in the mid-1990s, he worked in the Tribal Nanitch Sahallie substance abuse program for three years. Before that, in the 1980s, he worked at Chemawa Indian School in recreation and recovery programs for eight years.

And it is no small consideration that he also has been in personal recovery for 14 years.

"I know what it took me to get out of drugs and alcohol," he said. "It's the little things you do that make the difference."

In fact, it was his sister's (Tribal member Lani Folden) invitations to go riding that he turned down in favor of some healthier choices that finally drove him into recovery.

"My sister begged me to ride," he said, "and I realized I was not doing any of the things I loved."

So, what he envisions — and has envisioned for years — for the Saddle Club is a place where people make a commitment of time and interest in the club, but not the kind of commitment that you wake up in the morning and say, "Oh no, I have to go to Saddle Club today."



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal descendant Tisha Folden, niece to Tribal member Clint Folden, places the bit in Mo's mouth as she puts a bridle on him to prepare him for riding on Saturday, April 10.

If you go

Grand Ronde Saddle Club Fun Day & Spaghetti Feed
When: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 24

What: Horseback riding at the Tribal Rodeo Grounds and spaghetti feed in the Tribal gymnasium

Cost: Spaghetti feed is \$3 per person or \$15 for a family of six

Raffle: Tickets are \$1 each or six for \$5; prizes include an overnight stay at Spirit Mountain Lodge, dinner for two at the Cedar Plank Buffet, a Pendleton blanket and other items.

Contact: Lisa Leno at 503-879-1471 or Tribal Elder Violet Folden at 971-218-3750.

Instead, he is looking for the kind of commitment where you say, "All right, today is Saddle Club day again."

He is hoping to bring in folks who have long loved rodeos, or had previous experience with horses, or just always wanted to try horseback riding. And the way he is setting this up is to get people involved at whatever their level of experience is, from absolute beginner on up.

"I came to Grand Ronde from Salem in 2005," said Folden, "and

settled in. I took courses at the casino to get where I wanted to be, and now (with a job as a maintenance supervisor), I'm there."

Although the plans have been percolating, the kicker came in the middle of the night a few months ago. "I was out of money and didn't know where the next dollars to buy hay for the horses would come from," Folden said.

He headed out to the barn and realized, "You know it's spooky out there at night." Then, he ran into a couple of teenage girls who were at the barn petting the horses.

"I realized," he said, "if they wanted to pet the horses bad enough that they would go out in the middle of the night to do it, this idea of mine is going to happen."

The Saddle Club will be available to bring Elders together with youth and for birthday parties, and for individual and group projects. In addition, the Saddle Club will make use of the Tribal Rodeo Grounds and will schedule events with local riding clubs.

Tribal Council has supported his efforts by making the Rodeo Grounds available, and also with gifts like an overnight stay at Spirit Mountain Lodge donated for a raffle scheduled for Saturday, April 24, when the Grand Ronde Saddle Club hosts a Fun Day & Spaghetti Feed from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will

be horseback riding at the Rodeo Grounds and the Spaghetti Feed will take place at the gym. Cost is \$3 per person or \$15 for a family of six.

Sheker's fiancée is from the Umatilla Tribe.

"They have the Pendleton Round-up," she said. "They have a youth rodeo with other Tribes participating, and I just totally got excited and envisioned the Grand Ronde Saddle Club getting involved. To have their own tack and working with Elders to provide beadwork for those saddles, and to make it a great representation of Grand Ronde. I'm sure that this is going to be very successful."

Sheker's daughter, Tribal member Shantell Ulestad, 15, works with horses in a program down in Dallas.

"I clean stalls, get water, walk them around, feed them," said Ulestad. "They teach us how to make them trot. You don't hit them with the reins, you just put the reins out so they can see them. They teach you how to stop the horse with your stomach muscles. They can feel it."

Ulestad, who lives in Tribal housing, is excited to see a Saddle Club start in Grand Ronde.

"I used to be a little afraid of them, but not anymore," she said.

"She has really come leaps and bounds," said Sheker, "coming out of her shell, and academically as well. It's helped her get in a good comfort zone. I have nothing but praise for that program."

"We've got a great mix of horses," said Folden, "from a Missouri fox-trotter to a range mustang and even a miniature horse named Bucky that runs from adults but is kind as can be to little kids."

"You have to be in the lead," said Ulestad, "or else they'll think they're the boss of you. If they take the lead, you have to jerk them back, but not in a mean way, and then you take them around and start over."

It's not all fun and games, she added. "Oh, I hate picking up the poop. When it's steamy, oh my gosh! But you want to keep their stalls clean for them, to let them know you care about them."

The program is free. To tailor a program for yourself, your family or friends, contact Clint Folden at 503-559-1977. ■