

Only 20 spots are available on the team

UNICYCLE continued
from front page

Salem's, Oregon's and likely most of the country's elementary schools with the 10-year-old unicycle club. He also leads a 35-member jumping club at the school.

Olivia knew about Liberty Hot Wheelz from her older sisters and she had seen the group perform long before she was old enough to participate.

"They always perform for the student body," said Olivia's mother, Tribal member Nikki Hughes. "Olivia had seen it for years because she has older sisters. When she got in first grade, she said, 'I want to do it.' She couldn't ride a bike yet. A friend taught her to ride a bike. She learned in two days, and then went back to teacher."

Olivia earned her audition to the club a year before anybody else ever had.

"I was excited for her," said Nikki. "I knew that if she wanted to do it, she'd be able to do it. Her sisters had done swim team for a couple years when Olivia said she wanted to do that. She took swimming lessons and same thing again. She had four lessons before tryouts and she was determined enough to make it and she did."

Unicycle team members have performed for high schools and universities and performed for the Blazers twice before, Derowitsch said. They perform about six times a season, with practice held October through December and performances ending in March.

"We started as basically a morning unicycle practice because kids needed something to do," said Derowitsch. "It started as general practice time. Then, I had a call from City Center in Salem. They were tearing down an old hotel and having wheels and arts show, taking bikes apart and making



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Olivia Hughes, 8, ducks below a bar as she performs a trick during a performance with the unicycle club from Salem's Liberty Elementary School, the Liberty Hot Wheelz, during halftime of the Portland Trailblazers game against the Charlotte Bobcats at the Rose Garden in Portland on Wednesday, Feb. 1.

art out of them. They asked if we could give a demonstration. Of course, we did. Then others asked.

"It's quite a production to put something like this together. Every year, I don't think we'll ever do this again, but I can't turn down opportunities to show off our kids."

Some 50 students audition for about 20 slots. They start out in the mornings, riding the unicycles, learning to get on and off.

"It's like a farm club so to speak," Derowitsch said. "When they get their skills to a certain point, they go to the performance group. Then, they practice two nights a week after school, putting the routine together. We're adding in if we can and subtracting where we have to. We're morphing the time to get the routine to 7.5 minutes."

The time is very strict at the Rose Garden, he said.

"I have a TV broadcast person at my side at all times giving me the

time I have left," he said. "There's a three-minute warning, then a two-minute warning. At the end, we ride them right out of the corner (of the court). We have put the routine together in such a way that everybody is following each other on out the door and into the sunset."

As halftime ended, Derowitsch said, "Everybody was smiling and happy that we finished the entire routine and it was good."

The team rode a limousine up to Portland before the event, gorged at Burger King and walked to the Rose Garden. Olivia's father, Dan, and older sister, Tribal member Cassie, who is in seventh grade, helped get the ramps and the limbo stick out, and helped team members get on the giraffes. Nikki visited the lower seats to get photographs, while middle sister and Tribal member Genevieve, in fourth grade, and grandmother and Tribal Elder Susie Gilliam stayed up "in the nosebleed seats."

Olivia was very excited, but nervous, her mom said. "She just talked a lot about it. She couldn't believe how big (the Rose Garden) was."

In the end, "She just was happy to have done it and excited. We got her a drink and watched the rest of the game, and she just talked and talked about all the different things that happened. And said what a privilege it was, and how exciting it was."

Derowitsch pretty much knows by now who will be successful in the group.

"What I usually do is have auditions for the kids who want to do the morning program," he said. "I look for kids that when I place them up against the wall on the unicycle, they show balance and get to the point where they are comfortable. I'm looking for kids who are not afraid to come off the wall quickly, who are willing to take the risk and can build that trust with me in that short period of time."

"I can teach anybody to ride a unicycle. I learned at 54. It took me three months to get there. Fifteen minutes every morning and afternoon. And I worked solo. I'm not elegant up there on a unicycle, but I can get from one end of the gym to the other."

Physical Education and reading are currently Olivia's favorite subjects. She reads the Junie B. Jones, Diary of a Wimpy Kid and Cam Jansen books, Nikki said.

The family enjoys camping on the Oregon coast and at Hood Canal in Washington state. They're also busy with church activities. Olivia's been on several mission trips to Arizona to the Navajo Indian reservation.

"In Monument, Arizona," said Nikki, "there's a teeny, tiny church there that doesn't have anybody to love them. So we go in and do Vacation Bible School for them." ■

EFFECTIVE NOW

Changes to Social Services Emergency Assistance and Medical Gas Voucher Program

For all income criteria programs, wage verification for past 60 days (wage stubs) will need to be submitted. If client has not worked for a period of time, client will need to submit a printout from their State Employment Office or printout from Oregon Self-Sufficiency Office as verification of income. Rental/deposit or utility assistance may be utilized only one time in a 24-month rolling calendar period and is not to exceed the maximum contribution of \$1,000 per household within any 24-month rolling calendar period.

Medical Gas Vouchers

Social Services will not provide gas vouchers for medical appointments, counseling or drug & alcohol treatment. The only exception to this is for scheduled treatment plans, (i.e.: radiation, chemotherapy, surgery, etc.) and has caused hardship on the family, medical gas vouchers can be distributed to meet the need of the circumstances. A copy of all scheduled treatment plans must be received before client is eligible to receive this service. Assistance will end on the date of the last treatment appointment.

For a complete copy of policy or questions, please contact Tammy C. Garrison at 503-879-2077. ■

Zumba held in gym

Zumba, an easy-to-follow, Latin-inspired and calorie-burning dance fitness party, is held from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday in the Tribal gymnasium. The first class is free and \$6 thereafter for drop-ins, or \$5 if participants purchase a punch card. Contact Tribal Recreation Coordinator Alton Butler at 503-879-1369 or alton.butler@grandronde.org. ■

Available Now!

\$5.00

Available at the reception
desk in the Governance
Building

9615 Grand Ronde Road
Grande Ronde, OR 97347

postage and handling extra

503-879-5211 1-800-422-0232