

'This is the best job I've ever had'

CELEBRATION continued
from front page

community organizations that can respond to the changing needs of our communities."

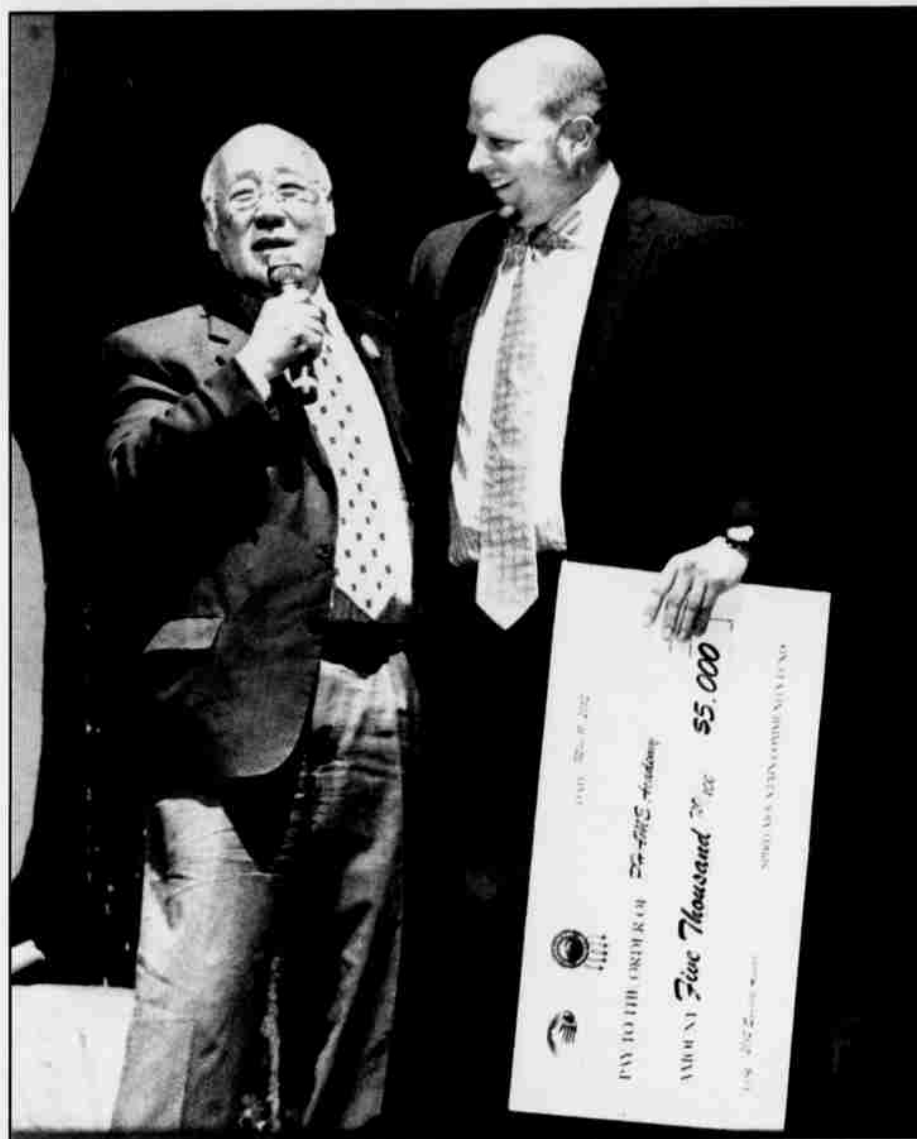
George introduced Tribal Council members, Community Fund and board members, as well as former Community Fund directors Angie Blackwell and Shelley Hanson Sneed.

"This is the best job I've ever had," said longtime board member and current Board President Sho Dozono. "We invest in you," he said of the recipients, "and you do the work. There must be tens of thousands out there that do the actual work."

Kitzhaber thanked the Community Fund for "a decade and a half of critical funding" for the state. "Grand Ronde has shown creativity and leadership in providing valuable resources. As Governor, I am grateful for these gifts."

Eight from the Community Fund Board of Directors selected recipients of special \$5,000 grants, as follows:

- Former Congresswoman Darlene Hooley: Chess for Success, a program to involve youth in the game of chess;
- Tribal Council Vice Chair Reyn Leno: A "jaws of life" for the Tillamook Fire Department, which covers an area with notoriously difficult roads and supported by some 50 volunteers;
- Tribal Council member Steve Bobb Sr.: Tina Miller Teen Center in Willamina, a place where Willamina teens can go "to know that they matter, that they're cared for and that they're loved," in Bobb's words;
- Dozono: PHAME Academy, theater for adults with developmental disabilities;
- Ron Reibach: CARE of Tillamook, a one-stop shopping store for basic needs like rental and utility assistance, and eviction prevention;
- Tribal Council member Toby McClary: I Have a Dream Foundation, enrolling children to invest themselves in their future;
- Secretary of State Kate Brown: Oregon Law Center, serving the poor, including farmworkers;



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Spirit Mountain Community Fund Board of Trustees Chairman Sho Dozono, left, talks about the PHAME Academy after presenting a \$5,000 check to its executive director, Stephen Marc Beaudoin, during the Fund's 15th anniversary celebration at Spirit Mountain Casino on Friday, May 11. Each of the eight Fund board members chose a non-profit organization to give a special grant to at the event.

• Chip Lazenby: Self-Enhancement, Inc., helping African American youth realize their potential.

"The Tribe has built a network of partnerships, of projects that make Oregon a safer, healthier, more resilient and inspired place to live," said George.

Elected officials in attendance included Jennifer Wheeler, Polk County Commissioner; Will Tucker, Linn County Commissioner; Dick Anderson, Lincoln City Mayor; and Jim Thompson, State Representative from District 23.

Alexie has always been the kind of speaker who takes no prisoners

nation's immigration woes: "I find it hilarious that this nation of immigrants has trouble with immigration."

He took on Indian mascots: "I think Indians should have white mascots, like 'the Messiahs: hammer them, hammer them, hammer them!'"

He took on gay marriage, saying this to those who oppose it: "You're actually punishing love and a commitment to fidelity." He called the Declaration of Independence "the greatest document in history" for championing individual freedoms that "still left out everybody but property-holding white men." Giving gays the right to marry, he said, is a step in the same direction as ending slavery, giving women the vote and recognizing the rights and humanity of Indians. "If you want to stop gay sex, all you have to do is let them get married."

From the audience, National Indian Child Welfare Association Executive Director Terry Cross said the night was "a wonderful, educational event in many ways. The presentation was so inclusive. Sherman Alexie did a wonderful job teaching in a way people understand, with humor, so people could feel it deeply."

"It was empowering, enlightening and exciting," said 2008-09 Hatfield Fellow Francene Ambrose. "It's amazing what we've done in one generation," she said. "I can't wait to see where the next six generations take us."

"I can't believe it's been 15 years," said Tribal Council member Chris Mercier. "It would be cool to review what a difference we've made in the lives of people across the state. We give back to the community, and we mean it."

"I was truly humbled and felt very blessed that we are able to do this," said Kennedy.

"The people and the organizations in this room undertake their work because they believe in an Oregon that isn't here just yet," said George. "The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde believe in that Oregon, too, and on behalf of the Tribe, I thank you for your work to make that Oregon real." ■

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in a context of love mixed with contempt. He called himself the most dangerous of combinations, a liberal Indian.

In his formal address, he talked about growing up poor on the Spokane Reservation, and how and why he got out, much of it the story told in his latest book, "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian."

In response to questions, he took on the



Tribal member and Grand Ronde Canoe Family member Mary Lopez dances during the cultural presentation portion of the Spirit Mountain Community Fund 15th anniversary celebration at Spirit Mountain Casino on Friday, May 11.

Writer, poet and storyteller Sherman Alexie (Spokane) demonstrates a pose that Indian-themed toys came in when he was a child as he speaks during the Spirit Mountain Community Fund 15th anniversary celebration at Spirit Mountain Casino on Friday, May 11.