

# Willamina senior teaches Tribal history

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Willamina High School senior Cheyanne Fasana, 17, is on her way to a career in teaching. She made that career decision two years ago, after tutoring a young cousin.

Now, her senior project is educating a whole school.

"I really want to be a teacher, and I really want to spread the word about the Tribe. I want them to learn about the Tribe," Fasana said.

Her project created curricula about the Tribe for a combination fifth-sixth-grade class and another for kindergarten classes.

"Basically, I wanted to start at the top of the chain and the bottom of the chain. Eventually, I'd like to see it spread to each of the classes," Fasana said.

The straight-A senior created the curricula, the day-by-day lessons, exercises and tests that give the fifth-sixth-grade class information about the Grand Ronde Tribe's culture, government, sovereignty and language spread across 13 lessons. There are eight lessons for kindergarten classes, Fasana said.

"Kindergarten is a lot more basic. It's an introduction to the Native Americans in the community. We talk about families and the longhouse. They have a day for food, travel (canoe travel) and art. I did match every lesson to the state standards," Fasana said.

The project began at the end of June 2012 when she returned from an internship at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

She started by "mapping out" what she wanted students to know.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Willamina High School senior Cheyanne Fasana answers questions in Tribal Council Chambers during a tour for Willamina kindergarteners and fifth- and sixth-graders on Wednesday, Oct. 2. For her senior project, Fasana developed and is teaching a Native American curriculum, which includes general information about Indians and specifics on the Grand Ronde Tribe, to those grades and a field trip to the Tribal campus was part of the lesson. On their visit, about 160 students were welcomed by Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno, took part in traditional drumming, singing and dancing, and toured the Tribal Governance Center.**

The upper grade classes are full 40-minute, stand-alone lessons separate from other classes. For kindergarten, the lessons are 30 minutes. Teaching started at the beginning of this school year in late August and Fasana is teaching two classes.

In the upper grades, she taught as an aide to her mentor, Shelly Vaughan. In the kindergarten class, Fasana is teaching the curriculum as an aide to elementary teacher Sandy Bibetta. Before it is over for the year, Fasana will have taught all three elementary classes.

On Oct. 2, students from upper and lower classes took a field trip to the Reservation. It included a cultural presentation and tour.

Teachers were really accepting,

she said.

"They are really excited. I tried to make it basic so it was easy for them to teach. From students so far, they've loved it. I've gotten thank you cards and posters from the students. I know teachers say that the kids really enjoy it, and the teachers as well."

Being in the classroom teaching, she said, "I know for myself that the students really enjoy it."

"I think it's an amazing project," said Angela Fasana, Cheyanne's mother and Tribal Court administrator. "She's like the fourth generation in my family to graduate from Willamina High School. Our family has a long list of alumni including my husband and I; my father and mother (Tribal Chair Reyn Leno and his wife, Liz) graduated from there; brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles and cousins, and my grandfather, Richard Brown. Cheyanne's great-grandmother, Darlene Brown, graduated from there. She also was a teacher in the Willamina district for many years.

"The idea that she could create something that can stay in the district for years, I think, is amazing. That's the hope. I believe they will continue to teach this every year."

Cheyanne received some help from her parents, but not much.

"We kind of gave her some guidance," said Angela. Her husband, Ariaiah, who teaches science and physical education-health at the

high school, "just gave her feedback on some of the lessons. I did more proofreading stuff for her."

The quality and quantity of the work that Cheyanne put into the project did not surprise her parents. "She's an excellent student," Angela said. "When she sets her mind to something, she goes at it 100 percent."

Cheyanne also has a history of extracurricular activities. She participates in the leadership program, Honor Society and student government - this year as activities coordinator and last year as class historian. She was part of the junior booster club and participates in cross country and softball. She also does wrestling statistics for the team.

Just after the interview, she had to hurry for cross country practice.

Cheyanne started her senior project in June. She completed the written part of the project on Aug. 1. Classes using her curricula began in late August. The project is not due until May next year.

"I think part of what made this exciting to her was that she could combine her love of elementary education with her pride in her Tribe, her culture and her heritage," said Angela.

"I really want to spread the word about the Tribe," said Cheyanne. "I want them to learn about the Tribe." ■

## Roses for Restoration

Come help make Cedar Roses for presentation as part of this year's Restoration Celebration!

Volunteer groups will be making the cedar roses in Grand Ronde, Portland and Eugene.

Contact Flicka Lucero, Cultural Education Secretary, at 503-879-2268 for information regarding locations, dates and times.

## Parents Training focuses on sexual health

Youth Prevention will sponsor a Parents Training session that focuses on facts about sexual health at noon to 1 p.m. and 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 21, in the Youth Education Building.

Family Nurse Practitioner Tami Martin will discuss current sexual health information and contraception to help parents answer questions from their children. There also will be a question-and-answer period at the end of the training.

A light meal will be provided and door prizes will be awarded. Both sessions will contain the same information.

For more information, contact Amber Mercier at 503-879-2162. ■