

Summer internships keep Tribal youth busy

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

This year's summer interns worked hard, learned a lot and accomplished much as part of the annual Summer Youth Employment Program.

Some youth finished the program – 160 hours over six weeks – early. The program was flexible enough that others took time off for Youth Education programs, for example, and were able to work another week at the end to make up the time.

Such was the case with internships in the Collections Program under Exhibits and Archives at Chachalu Museum and Cultural Center.

Micah Rogers, 15, Kaylene Barry, 14, and Isaiah Holmes, 14, worked for a week at the program's end. Collections Specialist Veronica Montano, who managed the trio of interns, was amazed at how much they accomplished.

"They were a very big help on the Veterans Summit and pow-wow," she said. "They bagged up 300 to 400 packages of beading material. They also worked on basket cleaning, organizing the shelving units and putting artifacts on the shelves. They identified all of the collection's stone artifacts.

"They were able to get me pretty far ahead on artifact identification, so now I'm ahead five months. They actually did what I had scheduled for six months in the short amount of time (scheduled for four weeks) they were here."

With all that, the interns also completed a photo scanning project



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Izaya Towner makes change for a sale while working as a summer youth employee at Grand Ronde Station on Friday, Aug. 8.



Jasper Lillard washes dishes at Grand Ronde Station's Long Bell Diner while working as a summer youth employee on Friday, Aug. 8.

for four donated photo albums. "It came out to around 1,000 photos," Montano said.

The Collections Program brings in college interns during the school year, but Montano said she would take back any of this year's three interns for next summer's Youth Employment program.

exemplary guest service.

"An example that happened this summer was I had suggested to one of our summer youth to 'quickly' approach our customers with an urgency to help them, with a nice, welcoming smile on their face. A few days later, I was told this summer youth employee had received two \$20 tips in one day for his guest service. It is a very rewarding experience employing our Tribal youth in the summer intern program."

Matayah Holmes and Justin Fasana, both 15, worked in the Cultural Education Outreach program.

"They worked really hard and did a great job," said Kathy Cole, Cultural Education and Outreach Program manager. "We tried to give them a variety of tasks that would teach them about the many projects that our program provides for the Tribe.

"We had them looking at and learning about some of our cultural artifacts, grinding pigment, carving, gathering cattail, helping with the Culture Camp for K-5 and creating objects. We wanted them to learn more about their culture and also come away with completed projects."

"It was good" for Holmes, who will be a freshman next school year. This was his first time as an intern. Last year, he participated in the Canoe Journey to Quinault.

This summer, Holmes and Fasana wrote Chinuk Wawa words in books for pre-school children. The project also had them using colors to help the younger ones learn the language. They also put Chinuk Wawa words on magnets with the same intent in mind.

"I would pick the same internship next year," Holmes said. "I liked it where I worked. I thought it was interesting."

Thirty-one Tribal youth interned in 18 Tribal departments.

The jobs were advertised by the Tribe's Human Resources Department in *Smoke Signals* and the youth had to apply for the jobs that interested them.

The positions paid \$9.10 an hour. The program is operated through the Tribe's Youth Education Program.

"We had a great Summer Youth Employment Program," said Tim Barry, program manager for Youth Education. "Many learned valuable skills and received on-the-job training."

This year, three professional development days focused on financial savings, work readiness and college preparation, he added. ■

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Help wanted

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's 477 Employment and Training Program and Land and Culture Department have resources that can be utilized along with community members who have a passion for gardening or want to learn the art of agriculture. If you are a Grand Ronde Tribal or community member and want to be a part of the planning, preparation and cultivation of the Tribal garden and orchard site for this year's planting season, contact Barbara Gibbons at 800-242-8196, ext. 2135, or e-mail barbara.gibbons@grandronde.org. ■