

Community Fund nears \$64 million in giving

Sheridan Veterans Memorial project receives \$15,000

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

In awarding 25 grants worth \$527,822 on Wednesday, Dec. 17, Spirit Mountain Community Fund closed out 2014 just shy of reaching the \$64 million mark in giving since its inception in 1997.

The fourth-quarter grants brought the Community Fund's running total to \$63,942,823.10. The fund is the philanthropic arm of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and disperses 6 percent of Spirit Mountain Casino's profits to nonprofit organizations within an 11-county area of western Oregon.

In 2014, the Community Fund distributed \$2,866,818, according to Grants Coordinator Julia Willis.

One of the closest grants at \$15,000 was awarded to the city of Sheridan to help fund its Veterans Memorial.

City Manager Frank Sheridan said the memorial will cost approximately \$80,000 to erect and will be located on Highway 18B on west Main Street about six blocks from the bridge.

A contingent of veterans dressed in Oregon Veterans Motorcycle Association vests attended to accept the Community Fund grant.

The check distribution ceremony opened with Land and Culture Department staff members Bobby Mercier, Brian Krehbiel and Travis Stewart performing cultural drumming and singing.

Community Fund Director Kathleen George told attendees that the Grand Ronde Tribe appreciates partnering with their organizations to make western Oregon a better place to live.

"You identify a problem and step up and find a solution," George said. "You really, truly are our community champions."

Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno, also sits on the Community Fund Board of Trustees, welcomed grant recipients to Grand Ronde and briefly outlined the Tribe's history from the founding of the Reservation in the 1850s through Restoration in 1983.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Kenny Dunn, left, an Oregon Veterans Motorcycle Association member, and Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno, right, meet during the Spirit Mountain Community Fund fourth-quarter grant presentation held in the Governance Center on Wednesday, Dec. 17. Dunn was with a group from the city of Sheridan, which received a \$15,000 grant to help fund the Sheridan Veterans Memorial project.

Leno said that the Community Fund grew out of the Tribe's commitment to West Valley communities that helped take care of Tribal members during 29 years of Termination.

Leno also acknowledged the veterans in the audience. "Veterans are held in high esteem in Indian Country," he said.

After attendees watched a video that briefly recounted the Tribe's history and explained the Community Fund, checks were distributed by Tribal Council members Ed Pearsall and Toby McClary, who also sit on the fund's Board of Trustees, while Program Coordinator Louis King read off the names.

Organizations receiving grants on Dec. 17 were:

- A Social Ignition of Portland for its Ignition Option 2 project, \$1,455;
- Benton Furniture Share of Corvallis for its Reuse Furniture Delivery and Landfill Diversion project, \$5,000;
- Coastal Range Food Bank Inc. of Blodgett to purchase food, \$1,000;
- Lettuce Grow Garden Foundation of Portland for garden infrastructure repair at Hillcrest Youth Correctional Facility, \$1,000;

- Marathon Education Partners Inc. of Portland for its Rising Stars Summer Camp, \$5,000;
- Mid-Lane Cares of Veneta for an emergency food and assistance coordinator, \$5,000;
- Red Lodge Transition Services of Portland for its Healing the Sacred Hoop project, \$5,000;
- Yamhill County CASA of McMinnville for its Serve Every Child project, \$5,000;
- African American Health Coalition of Portland for its Diabetes Self-Management Program, \$20,000;
- Downtown Languages of Springfield for its Pilas! Family Literacy Program, \$16,000;
- Groundwork Portland of Portland for its Healthy People, Water and Land project, \$30,000;
- Huerto de la Familia (The Family Garden) of Eugene for its Alliance for Healthy Families and obesity prevention project, \$31,977;
- Lane County Legal Aid & Advocacy Center of Eugene for its Rural and Multicultural Outreach project, \$43,655;
- Looking Glass Youth and Family Services Inc. of Eugene for its

- Riverfront School and Career Center, \$25,000;
- Native American Youth Association of Portland for its After-school Academic & Enrichment Program, \$50,000;
- Pastoral Counseling Center of the Mid-Willamette Valley in Corvallis for its Giving Voice to Children in Need Through Play Therapy project, \$9,392;
- Portland State University Foundation in Portland for its Promoting Lifelong Healthy Eating Habits Among Native American Children project, \$15,000;
- Raphael House of Portland for its Comprehensive Prevention: Promoting Healthy Relationships for Youth project, \$25,000;
- South Land Family Nursery of Cottage Grove for its home visiting curricula for high-risk families, \$33,343;
- South West Community Health Center of Portland for its women's health clinics, \$10,000;
- The Wallace Medical Concern of Portland for its Rosewood Plaza: Dental, Medical and Housing Resources for Rockwood Families project, \$75,000;
- Volunteers of America Inc. of Portland for its Home Frees Healthy Teens services, \$50,000;
- Children's Cancer Association of Portland for its Chemo Pal Mentor program, \$25,000 (previously awarded at an Oregon State University basketball game);
- And the Dental Foundation of Oregon in Wilsonville for its Tooth Taxi free mobile dental clinic, \$25,000 (previously awarded at a University of Oregon basketball game).

Spirit Mountain Community Fund also raffled off two gift bags that went to Red Lodge Transition Services and Downtown Languages.

The check presentation wrapped up with recipients getting their photo taken with Leno by Tribal photographer Michelle Alaimo.

Tribal Council members Jon A. George and Chris Mercier also attended the event.

"I can't think of a better way to wrap up 2014," George added. ■

Cultural Trust Board accepting applications

The Tribe's Cultural Trust Board has started its 2014-15 grant-making round for grants ranging from \$250 to a maximum of \$1,000 available for Grand Ronde Tribal members to use for cultural projects or activities that support the understanding, practice and preservation of traditional Tribal heritage and culture.

The grant-making round has been extended to Thursday, Jan. 15.

Interested Tribal members can pick up an application at the front desk in the Governance Center or mail the Cultural Trust Board at Grand Ronde Cultural Trust Board, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR 97347, to have an application mailed.

Completed applications must be received by noon Thursday, Jan. 15.

The project is supported by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and funded by Oregon Cultural Trust, which invests in Oregon's arts, humanities and heritage. ■

Elders' phone numbers wanted

The Tribal Elders Committee is compiling a volunteer phone list of Elders.

If you would like to submit your phone number and address to be available to other Elders, send it to elders.committee@grandronde.org or leave a message at 503-879-2231. ■

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