

Lynch the right prescription for Tribal Pharmacy

By Brent Merrill

Smoke Signals staff writer

Dr. Leatha Lynch, the new director of the Tribal Pharmacy, is a Tribal member who, according to Grand Ronde Health and Wellness Center Executive Director of Health Services Kelly Rowe, continues the recruitment of quality people to work in Grand Ronde.

Lynch lives in Depoe Bay with her husband Rob and new Siberian Husky Kaia, but she said she is thrilled to be looking for a place to live in Grand Ronde. The Lynches have two adult daughters, Natasha, 27, and Tyler, 22.

Just before coming back to work for the Tribe, Lynch had been managing the pharmacy for the Siletz Tribe and she had spoken with Rowe on the phone about the open position in Grand Ronde.

"Kelly and I started talking about our vision, our dreams, our hopes and our enthusiasm to bring our talents back to our Tribe," said Lynch. "The more I spoke to her the more I started to entertain that I really could come back home and I could bring my talents back here. If you listen to life, I think it takes you where you are supposed to be and I like that."

Lynch brings experience and education to the job as lead pharmacist having graduated in 2010 from Pacific University's School of Pharmacy with a doctorate degree. She also earned a bachelor's degree in pre-med from Portland State University in 2007.

"I really am thrilled to have her here," said Rowe. "She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, and she has a great style and demeanor that fits very well with the clinic and what we're working toward."



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Leatha Lynch is the Tribe's new Pharmacy director.

Rowe said she and Lynch found common ground during their conversations.

"We had some similar feelings about being able to contribute to not only the health and wellness, but be involved with the Tribe and how meaningful that is to both of us," said Rowe. "I was very happy to know that we would have somebody of her caliber that is incredibly knowledgeable and has the experience with Tribal health. For one of our own to be able to come back and be here is amazing."

Tribal Council Secretary Cheryle A. Kennedy, who was the Tribe's first Health Director, said she was happy about Lynch returning to Grand Ronde.

"I am filled with gratitude when a Tribal member comes home to serve our people in the health care field," said Kennedy. "What a tremendous accomplishment

Leatha has achieved in mastering the rigorous studies of her discipline, pharmacy. The recruitment for a chief of Pharmacy has been a long road, but one worth waiting for when one of our own with her credentials is hired."

Lynch has a science background and studied genetics, but she also has experience with executive-level administrative work and spent time working for the Tribe as a site monitor doing archaeology-related activities.

"I believe life is a pathway and you go after what you're passionate about," said Lynch. "That's what's going to make you happy."

Rowe said Lynch fills a crucial role on the team she's trying to put in place.

"We are looking at where we're at and where we want to go," said Rowe. "She (Lynch) gets that and the vision is the same, so I'm very happy. I shared with her what the possibilities here are and how much of an opportunity there is here to really make a difference."

Rowe said they both share a view of the larger picture.

"It really fits the idea of being able to effect a change on the Tribal

health as a whole," said Rowe. "To do something that is bigger than each individual is exciting. And then to be able to have Tribal members be involved in our own Tribe, it's just the right thing and it feels good. She's here and it fits well."

Lynch said there is a new feeling around the clinic and she's happy to be a part of that.

"I'm excited to see what we can start to accomplish," said Lynch. "I'm really excited after talking with Kelly to start sharing her vision and start sharing with her mine. I'm realizing how aligned we are. It's an interesting place to be on the crest of when you can see the potential of what we could be as a clinic and what we could be as a community. It's an awesome feeling."

Lynch said leaving Siletz was bittersweet, but that the welcome she has received in Grand Ronde has made a difference.

"I left there (Siletz) with so many people that are like family," said Lynch. "It's been amazing (here in Grand Ronde). Everybody has just been really friendly, really helpful and really informative. It's helped solidify that feeling of coming back home."

Since Rowe took over the clinic last November, she has hired a team that now has Lynch as well as new Behavioral Health Director Jan Kaschmitter, new medical provider Dr. Paul Vitt and new Optometrist Dr. Andrew Ngo.

"The wellness center now has a full team of providers resulting in enriching our community," said Kennedy. "I look forward to seeing our health services flourish."

"We have a really good staff and we have brought on people that have the ability to make it great," said Rowe. "We want to be the best that we can be to deliver the best that we can to the Tribal members in the community and to always be focused on the mission. That is the goal." ■

Canoe Meetings

Hello Community! We would like to invite you all to the Canoe meetings set for this year.

When: May 14, June 12

Who: Those people interested in participating in Canoe Journey

Time: 12-3pm (Lunch is provided)

Where: Grand Ronde Tribal Gym

**Please contact Cristina Lara for more information
503.879.2040**

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