

Health & Wellness Center employs two new doctors

By Bethany Bea

Smoke Signals Intern

The Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center has hired two additional doctors within the last six months: Dr. Linda Kit, in optometry, and Dr. Randy Blome, a family medicine doctor.

Blome started on Jan. 26 while Kit has been working at the Tribal clinic since August.

Health Services Executive Director Kelly Rowe said she's very pleased with both doctors.

"With both these providers it was apparent that their clinical and technical skills are top-notch, but also their demeanor and ability to relate to patients was clear," Rowe said.

Blome, 57, grew up in Ohio and, after completing medical school and his residency there, moved to Oregon with his wife and son in 1991. He worked at a clinic in Sandy for 20 years and came to Grand Ronde after working at Providence Newberg Medical Center for the last five years.

He said he retains a love of small towns after growing up in mostly rural areas near Toledo, Ohio, and said the countryside around Grand Ronde reminds him of his home state.

"The Willamette Valley is a lot like the part of Ohio I'm from," said Blome, "but we don't have the mountains on either side."

When he's not at the clinic, Blome enjoys spending time in the woods, hiking and fishing. He said when he first came to Oregon, he was struck by the water quality of the rivers.

"All the rivers in Ohio are kind of brown, muddy rivers that slowly move through all the farm fields," Blome said, "but I love the clean



Dr. Randy Blome, a family medicine doctor, started in the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center's Medical Clinic on Jan. 26.



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Dr. Linda Kit has been working as an optometrist in the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center's Optometry Department since August 2016.

rivers out here."

Blome commutes to Grand Ronde from Dayton, a round trip of about 60 miles, but years of living in the Midwest mean he wasn't bothered by the recent snow.

"The amount of snow we had a little bit ago, we had that every day for three months," Blome said.

Kit, originally from Baldwin Park, Calif., said she was prepared for the snow because she spent a year on the East Coast doing her optometry residency at a Veterans Affairs hospital in Connecticut.

Kit completed her undergraduate studies at UCLA, then attended optometry school in Pomona, Calif. She said her decision to choose optometry developed over a lifetime of good experiences with her own eye doctors.

"I've been wearing glasses since I was in the second grade," Kit, 29, said, "and all of my optometrists have been really friendly, too, and that's something that I value, and I want to be the type of optometrist that will also be there for my patients."

Kit was working in private practice in Seattle when the opportunity to apply at Grand Ronde arose. She said she was eager to practice optometry in a Tribal clinic because there are eye issues that are common in Tribal communities, such as glaucoma and diabetic eye diseases.

"Any patients who have diabetes, we always want them to come in," Kit said, "whether it's been one or two years, or you've never had an eye exam."

Kit was awarded a fellowship with the American Academy of Optometry at its annual meeting held in November 2016. She said the type of doctors the academy looks for when awarding fellowships are those who are passionate about staying current on advancements in the field. This way, she said, patients can feel confident that they are getting the best information and options available.

Rowe said having a doctor with that type of recognition available for Tribal members is a great thing.

"That's exciting to know that we have a doctor of that caliber here," said Rowe.

Blome said he decided to go into family medicine because he loves working with people of all ages, especially children. He said he'll take time when a child is visiting for the first time to ensure that they feel comfortable.

"I love dealing with kids," Blome, who has a 4-year-old granddaughter, said. "I found if I develop a rapport with a young child like that and they're comfortable with me, in the long run it pays huge dividends because then they like coming to the doctor's office."

He said a positive difference

about working at the Health & Wellness Center is that it allows for strong doctor-patient relationships compared to larger practices.

"It's really frustrating to be in a system where they want you hurling people in and out every 15 minutes," said Blome. "I've found Grand Ronde very generous in how it takes care of people."

Blome said at his last practice, appointment times were usually 15 to 30 minutes, but at the Health & Wellness Center they allow 30 minutes to an hour.

Kit also cited the extra time with patients as one of the best things about working in Grand Ronde. She said at previous offices, a typical eye appointment would be 30 minutes, but now she's with a patient for an hour.

"I feel like there's so much more time to get to know the patient, to understand what they need and what they want coming in to the exam," Kit said.


Rowe said she agrees that the Tribe's clinical setting can be different from other practices and a doctor who enjoys that difference is a good fit. She said what Health Services looks for in applicants is a desire to be a part of the team in a professional sense, but also a desire to get to know the Tribal membership as people.

She said the fact that many employees are also Tribal members adds to the strong sense of family at the clinic.

"There's always the sense of community," said Rowe. "So we try to identify providers that recognize that and don't just respect it, but support it and become a part of it." ■

CTGR Recreation Department

Gymnasium-



All non-business hour access

***Security must be notified before accessing Tribal Facilities**

**You must show ID upon request. If you cannot provide an ID, you may be asked to leave the Facility*

Hours of Operation:

6am – 9pm Monday – Sunday
**Hours of Operation are subject to change without notice due to scheduled events.*

Fitness Center Access:

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Tribal/Community | 6am – 8am & 5pm - 9pm (Monday-Friday) | Contact Security |
| | 8am – 5pm (Monday-Friday) | Contact Recreation Staff |
| | 6am – 9pm (Saturday/Sunday) | Contact Security |

**Access is granted to Tribal/Community Members only during the hours above. Everyone who enters fitness center must sign-in.*

CTGR Employees Access by Employee Badge

**In the event your employee badge does not grant access to the gym, contact Security. Show your employee badge, and the officer on duty will let you in.*

Age Access Policy:
(For Fitness/Weight room)

MUST Be 18 years or older to be in the Fitness/Weight room Center
Youth 13-17 may use the Fitness Center with adult supervision (over 18)
Youth 8-12 may access the Fitness Center with adult supervision, but may not use equipment.
Youth ages 7 and under are not permitted in the Fitness Weight Room

Age Access for Gymnasium: Youth under the age of 18 must be supervised by an adult

Please note: Youth Access policies are in accordance with existing safety ordinances adopted by Tribal Council

Contact information:

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Recreation Staff | Recreation Specialist | (Harris Reibach) | 503-879-1369 |
| Facilities | Administrative Assistant | (Holly T.) | 503-879-2195 |
| Security | | | 971-901-1031 |
| Facilities | Manager | (Tyson M.) | 503-879-2418 |
| Police/ Police Emergency | | | 503-879-2123/911 |

Adult Members' Trust and Minors' Custodial & Rabbi Trust Funds

Investments in the Adult Members' Trust Fund and the Minors' Custodial and Rabbi Trust Funds are updated each business day.

If you are a trust participant and/or if you are the parent/guardian of a minor member, you can access and review your balance and your minor child's balance by visiting ww.401Save.com.

To log-in, the initial User ID is your (or your child's) Social Security number, and the initial Password is "00" followed by your (or your child's) membership number. Once logged in, you can customize your User ID and password for security purposes.

If you have any trouble logging in to or using the system, contact the 401Save Call Center at 1-888-700-0808 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific Time, Monday through Friday. ■