

More than 150 Native students honored

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

More than 150 students were honored during Native Student Success Night held Tuesday, March 14, in the Tribal gym.

Students in kindergarten through 12th grade were honored for their attendance, as well as academic performance during the 2016-17 school year.

To be honored for attendance, students had to have attended school 95 percent of the time or better and have no more than four absences or tardies/leaving early during that time period.

The Tribal Canoe Family performed a welcome song to open the event and Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno, Secretary Jon A. George and Tribal Council members Kathleen George and Brenda Tuomi attended.

Youth Education Program Manager Tim Barry acted as master of ceremonies.

Willamina School District Carrie Zimbrick said that the Native student graduation rate for seniors at Willamina was 100 percent during the 2015-16 school year and that the Native student dropout rate has declined to 2.2 percent, a full 6 percentage points less than that state average. She added that kindergarten through seventh-grade attendance has been improving this year with each grade seeing an average of 10 percent improvement.

Students honored for attendance were:

Kindergarten: Tiberius Bailey, Brayden Fox, Cohlman Hubbell, Logan Kneeland, Auburn Mercier, Lyjah Murray, Kayway Norwest, Paisley Risseeuw and Kionna Smith.

First grade: Satara Blanchard, Micah Bruckner, Owen Campbell, Riya Daligdig, Libby Ellingson and Brayden Hibdon.

Second grade: Ezri Bailey, Rylee Bishop, Redsky Clawson, Wyatt Hubbell, Konner Hyatt, Samuel Lancour-Joles, Ailya ManyHides, Natilynn Mercier, Benjamin Moore, Lela Murray, Landon Risseeuw, Ekias Sabin and Tidus Sabin. Honorable mention: Nicholas Thayer.

Third grade: Aiden Campbell, Amaya George, Sophia Ortiz, Angel Patterson, Lily Runningbird and Corben Hibdon. Honorable mention: Paige Baker and Gracie Allen.

Fourth grade: Austin Carrasco, Baylee Dumarce, Ava Fagundes, Jayce Jackson, Grace Lancour-Joles, Gracie Mercier, Kaikanim Mercier, Sadie Risseeuw, Michael Smith, Karsen Towner and Landon Shrabel. Honorable mention: Gage Hernandez, Kiah Runningbird-Redhawk and Keylie Runningbird-Redhawk.

Fifth grade: Kazsia Connelly, Kelana Daligdig, Lily Gehrke, Jacob Holmes, Rihanna ManyHides, Ben Powley Jr., Ethan Sabin, Summer Townsend and Jaylynn Hibdon.

Sixth grade: Kai Connelly, Christopher Ellingson, Bryanah Lopez,



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Emily Sterling, right, shakes hands with Kimberly Roybal, a college intern with the Tribe's Youth Education Program, as she receives a leadership award during Native Student Success Night for kindergarten through 12th-grade students held at the Tribal gym on Tuesday, March 14. More than 150 students were honored for their attendance and academic performance during the 2016-17 school year, and 10 students received leadership awards.

Hattie Mercier, Sage Runningbird and Chase Fox.

Seventh grade: Grace France and Piper Shrabel.

Eighth grade honorable mention: Dominik Briant, Amaryssa Mooney and Amelia Mooney.

Ninth grade: Keeton Walker, Elizabeth Watson-Croy and Alexis Robertson. Honorable mention: Emma Shrabel.

10th grade: Nicholas Colton, Jordan Mode, Jordan Reyes and Trinity Sherwood. Honorable mention: Kailiyah Krehbiel, Aspen Wilson and Makenzie Aaron.

12th grade: Nikeia-Jordan Barton and Andrea Grijalva.

Sheridan K-5: Brady Soderberg, Imarianah VanScoyk, Bonnie Baker, Hunter Mendenhall, Madalynn Montano, Jaidyn Bolen, Wanbli Standing Bear, Rayauna Meneley, Chloe Ayala and Quinton Dunn.

Sheridan Japanese School: Madison Justen and Noah Gerbrandt.

Students honored for their academic performance included:

Sheridan & Willamina K-6: Brady Soderberg, Jaidyn Bolen, Imarianah VanScoyk, Sabryna Willis, Bonnie Baker, Shaiyla Krebs, Meleena Montano, Chloe Ayala, Lio Norwest, Azen Pacheco, Quinton Dunn, Sophia Ortiz, John Marrufo, Michaeli Mercier, Lily Runningbird, Mae Townsend, Ethan Sabin, Ben Powley Jr., Daysia Duran, Mason Mercier, Kylie Smith, Samantha Bearface, Lacey Haller, Gracie Mercier, Sophia Grout, Natilynn Mercier, Cohlmann Hubbell, Allison Haller, Ian Mercier, Rylee Bishop, David Cooper, Auburn Mercier, Danilo Contreras, Baylee LaBonte, Grayson Hubbard, Wanbli Standing Bear, Rayauna Meneley, Jayden LaBonte, Hunter Mendenhall, Caden Meneley, Henry Standing Bear, Madalynn Montano, Austin Carrasco, Lilliyana Rideout, Corben Hibdon, Orrin Reid, Paige Baker, Kelana Daligdig, Cohen Haller, Chloe Guardiola, Hattie Mercier, Kady Smith, Brooklynn Bailey, Key-

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lie Redhawk-Runningbird, Bayleigh Leno, Aliya ManyHides, Laila Holsclaw, Owen Campbell, Samantha Hedrick, Gage Hernandez, Naomi Haller, Presley Savage and Carter Felton.

Sheridan & Willamina high schools (3.0-3.4 GPA): Tabor Cain, Conrad Farmer, Evan Leno, Iyana Holmes, Makenzie Aaron, Bethany McKnight, Kaleb Reid, Trinity Sherwood, Nicholas Larsen, A.J. Farmer and Ezra Pacheco.

Sheridan & Willamina high schools (3.5-4.0 GPA): Jordan Reyes (4.0), JC Rogers, William Soderberg and Andrea Grijalva.

Sheridan & Willamina middle schools (3.0-3.4 GPA): Dominik Briant, Darien Leno, Chazz Leonard, Vivyan Lopez and Amelia Mooney.

Sheridan & Willamina middle schools (3.5-4.0 GPA): Madison Aaron, Isabelle Grout, Moses Mercier, Sophia Stewart, Wyatt Baker, Jacey Smith, Amaryssa Mooney and Haley Ayala.

Sheridan Japanese School: Kaleigha Simi (4.0), Macie Ayala, Sean Gerbrandt, Noah Gerbrandt, Madison Justen and Raven Harmon.

In addition, 10 leadership awards were handed out. Recipients were:

High school: Isaiah Holmes and Emily Sterling.

Middle school: Jayden Saldivas and Ashton Leno.

K-5: Orrin Reid, Madalynn Montano, Kaleigha Simi, Kaikanim Mercier, Jaidyn Bolen and Tidus Sabin.

February Attendance Reward Family Night

On Thursday, March 16, students attending Willamina Elementary School were honored during Feb-

ruary Attendance Reward Night held in the Tribal gym.

Students either had perfect attendance or "outstanding" attendance, meaning they missed one day, had one tardy or left early one day, said Willamina Elementary Tribal Attendance Family Advocate Rebecca Arredondo.

During the recognition, the group Obo Addy Legacy Project performed.

Raffle prizes included two Chromebooks, instant cameras, games and gas cards.

Students recognized for attendance in February were:

Kindergarten: Tiberius Bailey, Rui Byrne, Brayden Fox, Cohlman Hubbell, Auburn Mercier, Timothy Murphy and Symphony Zimmer.

First grade: Satara Blanchard, Micah Bruckner, Owen Campbell, Libby Ellingson, Mali'la Grefsrud-Norwest, Bailey Murphy, Stephen Sanchez-Haller and Wren Stone.

Second grade: Ezri Bailey, Logan Clark, Sophia Grout, Laila Holsclaw, Wyatt Hubbell, Konner Hyatt, Aliya ManyHides, Presley Savage, William Stone, Nicholas Thayer, Conner Trammell and Kayden Zimmer.

Third grade: Paige Baker, Chenoa Freeman, Lily Runningbird and Kisor Savage.

Fourth grade: Austin Carrasco, Baylee Demarce, Ava Fagundes, Makyajay Grefsrud-Norwest, Grace Lancour-Joles, Austin Langley, Bayleigh Leno, Haley Maerz, Kaikanim Mercier, Mikayla Mercier, Keylie Runningbird-Redhawk, Landon Shrabel and Michael Smith.

Fifth grade: Kazsia Connelly, Keilana Daligdig, Cohen Haller, Jacob Holmes, Rihanna ManyHides and Quentin McCormick.

Sixth grade: Brooklynn Bailey, Kai Connelly, David Cooper and Christopher Ellingson.

The event was sponsored by the Tribe, state Department of Education and Willamina School District in an effort to improve Native student attendance in the local schools.

In 2014, a study performed by the Chalkboard Project and funded by Spirit Mountain Community Fund found that Native students in Oregon public schools had elevated levels of chronic absenteeism, which led to academic underperformance. Chronic absenteeism was defined as missing 10 percent or more of school days.

Students who miss that much school are unlikely to ever read or do math at grade level or earn a diploma, educational studies have found.

In reaction to the study's findings, the Grand Ronde Tribe has worked on improving student attendance, especially in Willamina where approximately a third of students are Native American and most of those are Grand Ronde members or descendants. ■