

Community Fund exceeds 2,500 grants

September check presentation approaches \$75 million mark

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Spirit Mountain Community Fund’s first quarterly check presentation since celebrating its 20th anniversary on July 29 propelled the fund past the 2,500 mark in the number of grants awarded since its inception in 1997.

The 37 grants – 21 large and 16 small – awarded on Wednesday, Sept. 13, in the Governance Center Atrium pushed the philanthropic arm of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to 2,530 grants given.

In addition, the 37 grants totaled \$733,404, pushing the amount donated by the Tribe to nonprofit organizations in 11 northwest Oregon counties to \$74.7 million.

The Community Fund receives 6 percent of Spirit Mountain Casino’s proceeds and awards grants to nonprofit organizations on a quarterly schedule, as well as to the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon on an annual basis. The Community Fund invests in organizations that enhance, among other things, education, health care, public safety and natural resources.

“You guys are just amazing grantees that do wonderful work in Oregon,” Spirit Mountain Community Fund Director Mychal Cherry said.

Cherry said that the Community Fund fulfills the Tribe’s Native tradition of potlatch, or sharing of good fortune.

“Your steadfast work in Oregon communities fulfills and supports our mission, and on behalf of the Spirit Mountain Community Fund staff, Board of Trustees and Tribal Council, I want to say hayu masi.”

Cherry also introduced her staff: Program Coordinator Angela Sears, Grants Coordinator Julia Willis and Administrative Assistant Jesse Knight.

Tribal Lands Manager Jan Looking Wolf Reibach opened the event with a prayer in Chinuk Wawa and a welcome song on drum.

Community Fund Board of Trustees Chairman Sho Dozono recognized dignitaries, such as Tribal Council members Denise Harvey and Jack Giffen Jr., who also are on the Board of Trustees, and Val Hoyle, a former Eugene-area state legislator who serves on the Board of Trustees.

Grantees watched two informational videos on Tribal history and the recent 20th anniversary celebration held in Portland.

Nkenge Harmon Johnson, president and chief executive officer of the Urban League of Portland, explained how the Community Fund’s \$20,000 donation to its Urban Tech Jobs Program will help job seekers in the Portland area.

Johnson said the program is designed to put people back to work at companies like Intel by teaching them the 21st century tech skills required to be competitive in the job market.

“This is not just so they can get



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Nkenge Harmon Johnson, right, president and chief executive officer of the Urban League of Portland, talks about the organization’s Urban Tech Jobs Program during Spirit Mountain Community Fund’s Summer Grant Presentation held in the Governance Center Atrium on Wednesday, Sept. 13. With her, from left, is Andrea Gall, Urban Tech Jobs Program team leader; Annie LaVerdure-Weller, executive director and co-founder of the Leadership Lab; and Cinna’Mon Williams, Urban Tech Jobs Program career and life coach.

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a job, but start a new career,” Johnson said. “They can create opportunities for themselves and their families.”

Johnson said that despite Oregon’s currently low unemployment rate, joblessness among the state’s African-American population remains in double digits. The jobs program will serve approximately 100 people over a four-year period, she added.

As Cherry read the names of grant recipients, Dozono and Hoyle handed out the checks and each grantee received a gift bag from the Community Fund.

Other organizations receiving grants were:

Large grants

- Social Good Fund of Multnomah County, \$40,000, for the Portland Harbor Community Benefit Project;
- Womenspace Inc. of Lane County, \$32,000, for preventing intimate partner violence through community outreach and education;
- Doernbecher Children’s Hospital Foundation of Portland, \$35,000, for its “Healing the Whole Family” guest house;
- Camp Fire Columbia of Multnomah County, \$40,000, for its middle school program “Academic Success for At-Risk Youth”;
- Juliette’s House of McMinnville, \$40,000, for its “Prevention Arc” effort;
- Lutheran Community Services Northwest of Yamhill County, \$38,400, for the West Valley Family Support Center;
- Parenting Now! of Lane County, \$20,000, for its “Making Parenting a Pleasure” programs;
- Pathfinders of Oregon of Multnomah County, \$37,544, for its Mentoring Inside Out effort;

- SquareOne Villages of Lane County, \$20,000, for Emerald Village Eugene, an affordable tiny house community;
- Children’s Healing Art Project Inc. of Multnomah County, \$10,000, for its CHAP Outside-the-Hospital Program capability expansion;
- Portland Homeless Family Solutions, \$15,000, for its homeless support project;
- Reading Results of Multnomah County, \$40,000, to ensure students are on a path to success;
- Salem Free Clinics, \$37,000, to provide culturally competent care to uninsured patients with diabetes in Marion and Polk counties;
- Shriners Hospitals for Children in Portland, \$33,200, for family quarters support;
- Liberty House of Salem, \$36,000, to provide health care for abused children, specifically a pediatric sexual assault nurse practitioner;
- Volunteers of America Inc. of Multnomah County, \$40,000, to fund a healthy teens project;
- Rose Community Development of Multnomah County, \$40,000, to fund its Lents Youth Initiative.
- Stand for Children Leadership Center of Multnomah County, \$20,000, for expanding access to college-prep courses and prevent students from dropping out;
- Tucker-Maxon Oral School of Multnomah County, \$40,000, to provide financial aid for deaf students from impoverished and underserved communities;
- College Possible of Multnomah County, \$16,000, to fund intensive summer transition programming for low-income graduating high school seniors.

Small grants

- Beyond Toxics of Lane County,

\$6,000, for its “Justice for Land and Worker” project;

- PTA Oregon Congress of Corvallis, \$6,000, for Head Start outreach;
- Guardian Partners of Multnomah County, \$6,000, to help prevent children from entering the foster care system;
- Children’s Advocacy Center of Lincoln County, \$6,000, to fund National Children’s Alliance accreditation;
- Family of Friends Mentoring of Multnomah County, \$6,000, for mentoring of youth in Gresham;
- Relief Nursery Inc. of Lane County, \$6,000, for its American Indian/Alaska Native outreach project;
- Stone Soup Corvallis Inc., \$5,000, to fund its effort;
- William Temple House of Multnomah County, \$5,000, to fund mental health counseling;
- Mid-Valley Literacy Center of Marion County, \$2,800, to support technology for organizational growth;
- Luckiamute Watershed Council of Polk County, \$4,460, for its “Love Your Watershed” community training project;
- Philomath Community Services, \$5,000, for purchase of a box truck;
- Playwrite of Multnomah County, \$5,000, to help bring youth “at the edge” into the theater community;
- CASA of Lane County, \$5,000, for its “A Voice for Every Child” effort;
- Kukatonon of Multnomah County, \$5,000, for its 2017-18 performance season;
- Portland Center Stage, \$5,000, to fund the spring 2018 production of Cherokee actress DeLanna Studi’s “And So We Walked.”
- Sustainable Northwest of Tillamook County, \$5,000, to fund its North Coast Community Forest Initiative. ■