

Youth Ed discusses successes, offerings

By Danielle Frost
Smoke Signals staff writer

Youth Education means something different depending on who is asked. To some youths, it is a place to play basketball after school; to others, tutoring and homework help, or a place where they learn about future careers.

On Wednesday, Jan. 10, Tribal Youth Education Department staff members Dominique Olson, Vincent Chargualaf, Todd Hackman and Tiffany Mercier hosted a presentation about current academic and extracurricular activities, reports and results, and potential barriers to student success.

The 12 attendees included parents, staff, Willamina School District Superintendent Carrie Zimbrick, Tribal Education Department Manager Leslie Riggs, Tribal Planning Director Rick George and Tribal Council member Kathleen George.

“What we are doing is different now than in the past, and we are constantly looking for ways to improve,” Youth Education Manager Tim Barry said. “There are so many things we can do, and it’s ever-changing. It is almost like casework to some extent. We look at each kid and each circumstance differently.”

Currently, Youth Education serves approximately 150 Native American students in middle and high school in Willamina and Sheridan.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Vincent Chargualaf, Tribal Youth Education 6-12 tutor/adviser, talks about the extracurricular activities the department provides to students during Youth Education’s grades 6-12 informational meeting held in the Employment Service Center on Wednesday, Jan. 10.

Tribal High School Lead Tiffany Mercier said that every student is unique.

“They are not statistics or numbers,” she said. “Each one of our kids are individual human be-

ings ... they all have a unique story to tell. There is no cookie-cutter solution for all of them. Each one is different, and we need to measure their success differently.”

While discussing the Youth Education strategies and accomplishments, Mercier said one was a record attendance at Native Club, with the highest number being 75 students. Another accomplishment is increasing parent engagement and positive reinforcement, such as student success nights, an honor and recognition ceremony, student spotlight in Smoke Signals and individual positive reinforcement.

“You have a very strong history in Grand Ronde, and we are honored to play a small part of helping to shape an already strong nation,” Mercier said.

“It is really important for our kids to know that we do pay attention and care. We’re working hard to increase parental communication and involvement. The goal is to have them involved as much

as possible.”

In addition to tutoring, Youth Education staff members act as mentors and advocates. Extracurricular activities and camps are held throughout the year.

Of the potential barriers to academic success, Olson, the Tribe’s Middle School Lead, said poverty was the biggest hurdle.

“I always list it first because it goes hand in hand with other statistics I share,” she said. “Our kids are at a heightened risk and these are the types of things we need to look out for.”

Barriers also include child abuse/neglect, substance abuse, general violence/crime, mental health, family history and lack of knowledge regarding resources.

“We want to give our kids a chance to break family cycles and be different than the statistics ... it isn’t all of our kids,” Olson said. “But we want to be a resource for (those) kids to break free.”

Zimbrick said that with the implementation of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, districts are required to consult with local Tribes on any federal funding it receives so that Tribal representatives can review it and offer feedback.

“I am hoping to host one of our School Board meetings with the Tribe annually. ... I am very thankful and grateful to the Education Department of the Tribe and what you do,” she said. ■

Name changes in court

Tribal Court provides both minor and adult name changes to enrolled members for a filing fee of only \$30. If you have any questions or would like to request a packet, contact Tribal Court at 503-879-2303. ■

GOVERNMENTAL CORPORATIONS ORDINANCE OPEN FOR COMMENT

The Tribal Council is considering amendments to the Governmental Corporations Ordinance. The proposed amendments were given a First Reading at the Nov. 29, 2017, Tribal Council meeting.

The proposed amendments provide that a director whose term has expired continues to serve until a successor is elected and qualified “except where the articles of incorporation provide otherwise,” and may include other minor technical (i.e., formatting, typographical, housekeeping) modifications.

Tribal Council invites comment on the proposed amendments to the Governmental Corporations Ordinance. For a copy of the proposed amendments, please contact the Tribal Attorney’s Office at 503-879-4664. Please send your comments to the Tribal Attorney’s Office, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347 or by e-mail to legal@grandronde.org. Comments must be received by Jan. 15, 2018. ■

BURIAL FUND ORDINANCE OPEN FOR COMMENT

The Tribal Council is considering amendments to the Burial Fund Ordinance. The proposed amendments were given a First Reading at the Nov. 29, 2017, Tribal Council meeting.

The proposed amendments increase the Burial Benefit from \$5,500 to \$6,000 and the Reception Benefit from \$300 to \$400. The proposed amendments also include minor technical (i.e., formatting, typographical, housekeeping) modifications.

Tribal Council invites comment on the proposed amendments to the Burial Fund Ordinance. For a copy of the proposed amendments, please contact the Tribal Attorney’s Office at 503-879-4664. Please send your comments to the Tribal Attorney’s Office, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347 or by e-mail to legal@grandronde.org. Comments must be received by Jan. 15, 2018. ■

Flu shots available

Patients at the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center can check in at any time to obtain a flu shot. For more information, contact Activities/Wellness Promotion Coordinator Kandee Little at Kandee.little@grandronde.org or at 503-879-2089. ■

LIHEAP program open in service area

The Tribal Social Service’s LIHEAP – Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program – is open to eligible Tribal members in the six-county service area and Clackamas County.

This is a first-come, first-served program and income criteria applies. LIHEAP is federally funded through the Department of Health and Human Services and is designed to help low-income households with home heating costs.

For more information, contact Social Services at 503-879-2034. ■