

Fund surpasses \$77 million mark in giving

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

Spirit Mountain Community Fund, the philanthropic arm of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, surpassed the \$77 million mark in giving on Wednesday, March 14, when it awarded 24 large grants and eight small grants totaling \$726,070 during its first-quarter check presentation held in the Governance Center Atrium.

Since its inception 21 years ago, the Community Fund has awarded 2,602 grants to 1,128 organizations. The fund receives 6 percent of Spirit Mountain Casino proceeds and distributes the funds to nonprofits in 11 northwest Oregon counties to aid such endeavors as education, natural resource protection, health care and public safety.

Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George opened the check presentation with a prayer and Lands Department Manager Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach performed an honor song.

Spirit Mountain Community Fund Board of Trustees Chairman Sho Dozono introduced Tribal Council members in attendance, which included Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, Brenda Tuomi, Kathleen George and Jack Giffen Jr. Kathleen George and Giffen also serve on the fund's Board of Trustees.

Attendees watched a 12-minute video that surveyed the Tribe's history and featured organizations that have been helped by Community Fund grants. Dozono then quizzed grant recipients with questions that were for the most part answered correctly.

"This is the best job I have had," he said. "I get to give away someone else's money to people who deserve it. It's been an amazing ride for me to see the generosity of this Tribe."

First-time Community Fund grant recipients Susan Armstrong and Nora Niesen of Guide Dogs for the Blind, and Golden Retriever/Labrador mix Valeda, gave a brief presentation about the history of their organization and the work they do to help people with visual impairments become more independent. The organization received a \$25,000 large grant to support work at its Boring campus.

The nonprofit organization began in 1942 to serve World War II veterans. Currently, it has evolved to two main campuses in San Rafael, Calif., and Oregon, with smaller "lounge" areas scattered about the region. It serves an average of 300 clients annually and has 2,000 puppy raisers. There are 60 puppy trainers total at the two main campuses.

"We rely solely on donations and it is expensive to make a guide dog ... it costs about \$50,000 each," Armstrong said. "We are very grateful for this money (today)."

Community Fund Program Coordinator Angela Sears then read off this quarter's grant recipients while Dozono distributed the checks. Community Fund Director Mychal Cherry, Community Fund Grants Coordinator Julia Willis and Administrative Assistant Jes-



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Spirit Mountain Community Fund Program Coordinator Angela Sears pets Valeda, a guide dog from Guide Dogs for the Blind who accompanied Susan Armstrong, right, to the fund's first-quarter check presentation held in the Governance Center Atrium on Wednesday, March 14. Armstrong is Guide Dogs for the Blind's vice president of Oregon's training operations and gave a presentation about the nonprofit during the check presentation.

se Knight shook grant recipients' hands.

Additionally, three necklaces made by Public Affairs Administrative Assistant Chelsea Clark and a Grand Ronde Pendleton Tribal blanket designed by Travis Stewart were given as raffle prizes.

Other large grant recipients were:

- Advantage Smiles for Kids of Redmond, \$40,000, for orthodontic treatment for at-risk youth;
- Boost Oregon of Portland, \$10,000, for outreach to health care providers and Spanish-speaking parents;
- Casa For Children Inc. of Portland, \$25,000, for educational advancement and fostering futures for youth in foster care;
- CASA Voices for Children of Corvallis, \$20,000, for quality advocacy for abused/neglected children and support of at-risk youth;
- Catholic Community Services of Mid-Willamette Valley & Central Coast of Salem, \$40,000, for integration of services to support homeless parents and their children;
- Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council of Cottage Grove, \$15,070, for the Watershed Action Teams for Education, Restoration and Stewardship effort;
- Community Resource Trust of Salem, \$50,000, for the Salem-Keizer Career Technical Education Center;
- Family Building Blocks Inc. of Salem, \$40,000, for expanding

capacity to serve children most at risk;

- I Have A Dream Foundation of Portland – Oregon, \$40,000, for the Dreamer School Project early childhood initiative;
- Lifeflight Network Foundation of Aurora, \$20,000, for its flight simulator campaign;
- Lifeworks NW of Portland, \$25,000, for Healthy Families Oregon;
- National Wildlife Federation of Milwaukie, \$25,000, for salmon restoration through an "eggs to fry" stewardship model;
- Oregon Environmental Council Inc. of Portland, \$25,000, for partnerships for new investment in clean water and healthy fisheries;
- Oregon Justice Resource Center of Portland, \$40,000, for its Women's Justice Project;

- Oregon Law Center of Eugene, \$35,000, for its Rural Outreach Project;
- Oregon Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation Inc. of Portland, \$20,000, for its mobile health screening program;
- Playworks Education Energized, \$30,000, for a Playworks coach in Portland;
- Raphael House of Portland, \$25,000, for its Prevention Education Program;
- Serendipity Center Inc. of Portland, \$15,000, for the Farm-to-Community project;
- Somali American Council of Oregon in Portland, \$40,000, for a community center and office;
- The Northwest Catholic Counseling Center of Portland, \$26,000, for mental health care for lower-income older women;
- The Salem-Keizer Coalition for Equality of Salem, \$40,000, for a parent-led early intervention and literacy intervention program for Latino English language learners in preschool through third grade;
- Xerces Society of Portland, \$15,000, for advancing healthy watersheds through freshwater mussel conservation.


Small grant recipients were:

- Clackamas Service Center Inc. of Portland, \$5,000, for its community health and nutrition program;
- Multicultural Integrated Kidney Education Program of Portland, \$5,000, for education and targeted mentoring for better health and lives;
- Muscular Dystrophy Association of Portland, \$5,000, for the Oregon and southwest Washington summer camp;
- Rock Creek Food Pantry of Portland, \$5,000, for its backpack program;
- St. Johns Food Share of Portland, \$5,500, for the FoodSecure – FoodSmart program;
- The Jim Pepper Native Arts Council of Portland, \$3,500, for the Jim PepperFest 2018 – Speak/Sing Native;
- Warrior Sisters of Eugene, \$5,500, for Warrior Sister Sundays: Empowering women and girls through free self-defense education;
- And Wordcrafters in Eugene, \$5,500, for its writers in the schools effort. ■

Social Services has bike helmets

The Tribe's Social Services Department has bicycle helmets available for distribution. Those needing a helmet should visit the department and sign a helmet application, as well as get fitted.

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



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