

Boxes being delivered as far away as Colorado

EDUCATION continued
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Employees brainstormed and came up with the idea of hihi-lak^ha-set, which loosely translated means “fun boxes.” Every week, a different theme is selected and the boxes are filled with corresponding items. Themes have ranged from how to make rice crispy treats to lava lamps to taking care of your teeth to sidewalk chalk artwork.

Every Monday through Aug. 24, the boxes are delivered to students’ doorsteps or mailed out, depending on where they live. On Thursday, Youth Education staff host a Zoom meeting to connect with youth and chat about projects they worked on and how things are going overall.

“We wanted to make it both fun and educational for youth who are missing out on our usual summer programming,” Youth Education Program Manager Tim Barry said. “Everyone in the department helps out, and then we hand deliver to Wilamina, Sheridan and Grand Ronde.”

A benefit of the new programming format is that youth from out of the area can participate as well, and it has attracted Tribal youth from as far away as California and Colorado.

“It’s helped us reach Tribal members who haven’t had a chance to participate in our summer programs before,” Barry said. “We’ve gotten really positive feedback on that.”

When the program launched in June, Barry and his staff were hoping to serve 60 students in



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

High School Lead Kaylee Oakes and Youth Education 6-12 Tutor Vincent Chargualaf prepare books that will be added to boxes sent to 6-12 students in the Youth Education Building on Wednesday, July 22.

kindergarten through 12th grade. They had 150 sign up. In July, the number jumped to 200 because the department was able to provide more boxes. They are expecting similar numbers through the month of August.

Barry isn’t sure if Youth Education will continue providing the boxes next summer.

“I don’t know what the future holds,” he said. “It kind of depends on the situation and where we are at with offering onsite programming. But, I do see the value in it for kids who can’t participate onsite. However, it’s been a huge process to put this on. We had to get creative to think of ways to get

all of the supplies every week.”

The boxes include a welcome sheet that covers the week’s activity and links to YouTube demonstration videos.

“We had to learn how to get supplies in and how to create fun, instructional videos,” Barry said. “Staff is creating four or five of these a week now.”

Youth Education has teamed up with several Tribal departments to create weekly themes for the boxes including Health & Wellness, Social Services, the Tribal Library and Chinuk Language Program. They’ve also partnered with Oregon State University Extension Service and the NASA STEM Program.

“My favorite aspect of this is twofold,” Barry said. “Seeing the staff excel at something we are not trained for, it’s been really great to see the work we are doing is important, and that we were able to adapt to a new, short-term normal. The

retention levels we’ve had with kids tells us that they like it. The staff has been very creative in finding new and different things to do with the kids.”

K5 Tutor/Advisor George Neujahr said he’s enjoyed learning how to shoot and edit videos for YouTube, many of which feature his pets.

“The whole process has been a learning experience,” he said. “We’ve been able to connect with youth that we normally don’t because of distance.”

Elementary Lead Matt Bucknell said the feedback he’s received from Tribal member parents has been gratitude for the boxes when so many other activities have been canceled this summer.

“They’re really happy kids have something to participate in,” he said. “We’ve gotten overwhelmingly positive responses from the kids, too. We’ve been able to collaborate with different departments and put extra activities in the boxes. Kids are excited to participate in it. When staff deliver the boxes, some of the kids start jumping up and down. It’s good to keep these connections while socially distancing.”

Bucknell said that with everything that has happened in 2020, it feels good to bring a bit of normalcy back again.

“We feel happy we’ve found something to provide for families during the shutdown,” Bucknell said. “By the end of the summer, we will have had 12 weeks of programming. Everyone here has had a chance to contribute something.”

Neujahr added that learning new techniques of communication has been an interesting process.

“I had to brush my teeth for one of our videos” he said. “It was different showing that to people, but I tried to make it fun.” ■

Spirit Mountain Gaming, Inc. Board of Directors Position Openings

Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. (“SMGI”), a Tribal corporation chartered by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (“Grand Ronde”), operates Spirit Mountain Casino – the largest casino in Oregon. Spirit Mountain Casino offers Las Vegas-style slots and provides superior entertainment and resort amenities. Spirit Mountain is one of the Pacific Northwest’s premier casinos. Grand Ronde invites applications to serve on the **Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. Board of Directors**. There are two board seats expiring on Sept. 30, 2020.

The SMGI Board of Directors is responsible to the Grand Ronde Tribal Council. The Board oversees strategic planning, overall fiscal accountability, budgets and operations of Spirit Mountain Casino.

The SMGI Board meets monthly. From time to time, additional special meetings may be held. Board members are expected to attend all meetings in person, which are held at Spirit Mountain Casino – although participation by telephone will occasionally be permitted. Each board member receives a monthly stipend for attending meetings. Travel reimbursement is limited to travel within the six counties of Polk, Yamhill, Marion, Tillamook, Multnomah and Washington.

Board members must have a superior understanding of and experience with financial statements, strong communication and analytical skills, experience in a hospitality or customer service driven environment, 10 years of experience in a senior management position, and a solid understanding of the Portland metro and Salem area economies. Experience in the following areas is also preferred: gaming, tourism, corporate finance and accounting, marketing and promotions, human resources, and management of senior executives. Experience with and knowledge of Native American organizations is also preferred.

Ability to pass a thorough background check and obtain a gaming license from the Grand Ronde Gaming Commission is required.

Preference will be given to qualified Tribal members.

Submission deadline: 5 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2020

Interested individuals should submit a letter of interest describing their qualifications, a résumé and three references to:

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E-mail: stacia.martin@grandronde.org

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