

# Waiver issued to run meal programs under summer model

**SCHOOL continued from front page**

vices Director Lynne Shore.

Unlike several districts across the country that have faced immense challenges getting food to students who need it, Willamina was able to make a relatively smooth switch from cafeteria to bagged lunch delivery.

“Willamina has run a (program) in the summertime for over 20 years so it was a fairly smooth switch,” Shore said. “The most difficult thing was making sure that the families in our school district knew that (lunches) were available and making sure that the distribution sites were in places that were easily accessible to our students.”

Accessibility has been a key issue in districts across the country. Among low-income households with children who qualify for free or reduced-price meals, only about 15 percent of these have been getting the food, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s weekly Household

Pulse Survey.

Additionally, the latest COVID Impact Survey found that about two in 10 Americans said they ran out of food in the past month before making enough money to buy more.

To help expand accessibility for children, the Department of Agriculture issued a waiver to allow schools to have the option to run their meal programs under the summer model. The waiver was recently extended until Dec. 31, 2020, or until funding has been exhausted. Under the summer program model, all children ages 1 to 18 are able to eat school meals at no charge and in some areas, including Willamina, with no applications.

After schools in Oregon were ordered to close by Gov. Kate Brown on March 13, Willamina School District nutrition services employees switched gears from the school lunch program to the summer program during the weekend.

“They began serving all of the community’s children at seven dis-

tribution sites the Monday after the shutdown began,” Shore said.

In February, before the pandemic was widespread and schools were shuttered, the district served an average of 631 breakfasts and 570 lunches daily. In May, the district served an average of 391 breakfasts and 391 lunches daily. The numbers are the same because breakfast and lunch were served together in the same grab-and-go bag.

To help get more meals into the hands of children who need them, the district has added school bus routes to its meal distribution plan. Students will be able to receive meals almost at their doorstep and won’t have to worry about transportation to or from meal distribution sites. Additionally, kindergarteners and other students who attend classes in their school building will receive a meal bag to take home with them at the end of the day.

“We are one of the very lucky districts that have not had to make any budget cuts to our program,” Shore

said. “We had a healthy financial reserve. I think our budget will be all right if the pandemic does not last too much longer and we are able to continue receiving meal reimbursements from the USDA.”

She describes it as a “win-win” situation.

“The more of our community’s children that we feed the better it is for all of us, as long as we receive reimbursement from the USDA, the district gets paid back for our food, travel and labor and our kids receive meals at no charge to help fuel their little bodies and minds,” Shore said.

In addition to the bus routes, there are also two distribution sites in Willamina for children who live in town. One is located in the parking lot outside of the school and one at Willamina Library, where there is also a “learning hub” with Wi-Fi hotspots.

Meal drop-off details are available on the district website, willamina.k12.or.us, and many of the school’s Facebook pages as well. ■

## Yakama author releases new Native-oriented book

EUGENE – Michelle Jacob (Yakama), a professor of Indigenous Studies and director of the Sapsikwala Education Program at the University of Oregon, has written a new book, “Huckleberries and Coyotes: Lesson from Our More Than Human Relations.”



The collection of stories invites readers to listen to, learn from and treasure their surroundings. Jacobs urges people to continue the timeless Indigenous tradition of engaging with stories and one another to build connection and strength within our communities and environments. The book was illustrated by Crystal Buck, a Yakama artist.

The book retails for \$20 paperback and \$9.99 as an e-book. It is published by Anahuy Mentoring LLC and can be ordered at [www.anahuymentoring.com](http://www.anahuymentoring.com).

Jacob also released “The Auntie Way: Stories Celebrating Kindness, Fierceness and Creativity” earlier this year.

Jacob said that royalties from both books are donated to the Sapsikwala Education Program that teaches American Indians and Alaska Natives to become teachers. ■

## Arbor improvements



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

**Scholten Construction Inc. Project Manager Justin Stritzke operates an excavator while preparing to lay concrete at úyxat Powwow Grounds on Thursday, Sept. 17. The work is the first part of a new 12-foot extension of the arbor’s covered area. Plans are for the concrete to be laid and the physical extension will be built in the spring. Tribal Council approved the contract with the Willamina company on Sept. 2.**

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For more information, contact Kamiah Koch at 503-879-1461 or [kamiah.koch@grandronde.org](mailto:kamiah.koch@grandronde.org)



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## Afterhours health line

Tribal members can contact the Afterhours Health Line for questions about health care concerns you may have when the clinic is not open. You can reach the Afterhours Health Line by calling 503-879-2002 and follow the prompts. The Afterhours Health Line will coordinate care and communicate with Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center providers. ■

## Pew raffle raising funds for central Oregon fire district

Tribal member Kayla Gottfried, owner of Wild Blackberry Moccas, is holding a raffle for a Wildland Heroes Pew to raise at least \$1,000 for the Upper McKenzie Fire Protection District located east of Eugene.

The raffle runs through Friday, Oct. 9, and may be extended if the \$1,000 goal is not met. In early September, the Holiday Farm Fire swept through the communities of Blue River, Leaburg and Vida. To give back, Gottfried is raffling off the refurbished 4-foot church pew made with a Pendleton Wildland Heroes Firefighters blanket. All proceeds will go to the Upper McKenzie Fire Protection District to help people in the area who lost everything.

To purchase tickets, visit Wild Blackberry Moccas on Facebook or [www.wildblackberrymoccas.com](http://www.wildblackberrymoccas.com). ■