

General Council briefed on Tribe's education efforts

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals staff writer

Education Department Manager Angela Fasana briefed Tribal members on the department's various programs and accomplishments during a Sunday, Jan. 3, General Council meeting held via the Zoom video conferencing application.

During the meeting, Fasana discussed the changing methods and challenging aspects of delivering services during a global pandemic.

"This year has been challenging and humbling for our staff in responding to our families," she said. "Since March, it has all been a COVID response plan. We immediately had to shift and make changes."

Fasana said that the Education Department's response plan is available on the Tribal website at www.grandronde.org.

"We're also working on a re-opening plan," she said. "We had to do a lot of research and sift through a lot of federal policies to see how to safely re-open."

Fasana said that the technology assistance grant, which provided \$500 for a laptop, tablet or desktop, was a huge help to both students and Elders. The grant, which was funded from federal CARES Act dollars, originally expired Dec. 31. In total, 563 students and 341 Elders were able to access the grant.

Fasana said that this year was also a time to work on creating consistency and cohesiveness within the Education Department.

"We're trying to create more efficiency in how we run the department," she said. "There are lots of individual silos within it. One of the main things I ask is are we providing the best services we can?" She said that holding regular vir-

tual community input meetings has been helpful in answering that question.

Fasana also provided an overview of the early childhood, youth and higher education programs, as well as an update on library services during the pandemic.

Some of the highlights include:

- There are 59 students in five preschool classrooms and 39 students in the home-based program. Current instruction includes virtual learning with packets of materials dropped off to families and meals delivered, socially distanced events, student assessments conducted outdoors, and home visitors providing virtual and socially distanced events.
- The Chinuk language program has provided virtual/limited in-person instruction and classrooms for preschool through high school students, as well as a virtual community class, videos and socially distanced parades and graduation. There are nine students in the preschool class, 13 in the kindergarten to third-grade class, 15 in the middle/high school classes and 13 in the community class.
- Youth Education serves 127 students who utilize virtual academic coaches or guided study classes. Additionally, the hihi lakhaset (fun boxes) activity project continues to serve hundreds of students locally and out of the area. Youth Education employees have created a YouTube channel



Angela Fasana

with a variety of videos and also have partnered with Youth Empowerment and Prevention.

- Higher Education currently has 95 students in bachelor degree programs, 41 in graduate degree programs, 87 in community college programs, eight in non-credit classes, nine enrolled in GED programs, two in early college enrollment and 38 enrolled in Families Working with Education & Family Partnerships. There is virtual tutoring offered during the pandemic, and virtual events such as financial aid nights, career coaching and student support.
- The library served 96 participants during its fall literacy program, is providing curbside check-outs for books and DVDs, virtual book reads by Librarian Kathy Cole, and will soon have a mobile library program for those who cannot do curbside pickup.

Fasana said that re-opening the Education Department programs to full, in-person learning and activities will be a gradual process.

"We have a lot of policies in place and have drafted numerous plans," she said. "Our goal is a gradual, safe re-opening. As vaccines roll out, that

will dictate what the road ahead looks like. I'm very proud of our staff for everything they have done."

Fasana took seven questions from the online audience. Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy said the presentation was "very informative."

"I know during COVID a lot of the students have struggled with online learning and continue to do so," Kennedy said. "I know that the Education program will continue to evolve to meet the needs of students. I want to say thank you to your team for taking the initiative to do different things."


In other action, it was announced that the next General Council meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 7, via Zoom with a program report from the Health & Wellness Department.

Door prize winners were Leroy Good, Veronica Gaston, Esther Foster, Karen Page and Debi Anderson, \$50 each; and Fae Smith, Elaine Robertson and Robert Wiggs, \$100 each.

The meeting can be viewed by visiting the Tribal government's website at www.grandronde.org and clicking on the Government tab and then Videos. ■

Childcare Reimbursement Program

Applications accepted September 1, 2020



Purpose: Tribal Funding allocated to assist families with high costs of child care through a partial reimbursement program through the Social Services Department.

- This is a first come first serve program
- Full applications and supporting documents must be received to process application
- Approved applicants will receive the reimbursement September 1 through August 31 of the current year
- Each household will receive up to a \$100 monthly reimbursement per eligible child
- Social Services will maintain a waiting list based on date/time of application in the event that approved applicants become ineligible at any point during the current application year


Eligibility:

- The child receiving childcare must be a Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) member and 12 years old or younger
- Child must attend a Certified Licensed Childcare Facility
- Parent (s) / Guardian must be currently employed at least 20 hours per week or more and /or attending school as a part-time student minimum
- Two parent/guardian household, both parents/guardians must be working or attending school
- Household must meet the income criteria of 185% of Federal Poverty Level

Documentation required:


- Completed Application
- Verification of child(s) residence or custody agreement (ie. 2019 Taxes, Rental Agreement, Snap report etc.).
- Copy of childcare facility license
- Release of Information for the childcare facility
- Copies of wage stubs for the past 30 days and current classroom schedule. For two parent/guardian households, both parents must provide documentation

Contact Social Services at (503) 879-2034




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 Do you have questions about diabetes?
 Do you need help managing your diabetes?
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2020: A YEAR IN REVIEW




Smoke Signals shares the photos and videos that captured the year.

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