



# RURAL EXPRESS

Child Welfare Partnership

Spring 2005

## In Celebration of Rural Practice A Summer Training Institute for Rural Child Welfare Staff

### What is the Rural Training Institute?

Sponsored by the Child Welfare Partnership under the Rural Training Grant: "Training for Excellence in Child Welfare Practice in Rural Oregon and Alaska," the Institute will focus on the unique work of child welfare professionals in rural and remote communities. The Rural Training Institute recognizes and honors the uniqueness of rural social work and will address creative ways to meet the challenges of transportation, limited resources, and issues around professional boundaries and confidentiality. The Rural Training Institute will provide opportunities to interact with others who share your commitment to rural social work and an understanding of its challenges and rewards.

### Who Should Come?

Currently there are seven pilot sites, six in Oregon and one in Alaska. The Oregon pilot sites are: Gold Beach, Enterprise, Burns, Lakeview, John Day, Warm Springs/Madras and Bethel, Alaska. Each of the pilot sites is invited to send three participants.

### What will be Covered?

Relationships, Networking, Understanding Rural Culture, Boundaries, Confidentiality, Safety Planning, Case Planning, Resilience, and more.

### Where will it be?

Inn of the Seventh Mountain, Bend, OR

### When will it be?

August 1 - 4th, 2005 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

### Registration

All requests should be coordinated through the Child Welfare Manager. Contact Judy Miller with questions: 503.589.7874 [jmill99@chemeketa.edu](mailto:jmill99@chemeketa.edu)

## Why I Love Rural Child Welfare Work...



"I like working in a small town where people know each other and are quite friendly. I feel at home. It is easy to meet people, both socially and professionally. I love living within another culture. I have a more balanced life."  
-- Bethel, AK

"I am able to really create relationships, love the travel, the lifestyle suits me, the pace of things, the staffings and collaborative work that goes on with community partners, internal branch staffings and dealing with the challenges of scarce resources" -- Enterprise, OR



"I can develop good relationships with foster parents and rapport with the families we serve. The small office allows for learning varied job duties and cross training. We have a closer relationship with the other state agencies, all within a close proximity."  
-- Gold Beach, OR



## Katharine's Corner



"In Celebration of Rural Practice" is the name of our Rural Training Institute this summer but it might as well be the name of the whole project. This issue of the newsletter features quotes from rural practitioners and an article by Mary McNevins addressing practice in Tribal and Alaska Native settings. The purpose of this project is 1) to distinguish the unique strengths and competencies needed to promote safety, permanency and well-being in rural and tribal settings and 2) to develop a range of curricula that address these competencies. By the end of this project you will be able to obtain a certificate in rural child welfare (building on the Rural Training Institute as a foundation, and adding on special coursework such as Indian Child Welfare, Boundaries and Confidentiality, and Resource Development...among others!). Thank you for your partnership and for all you contribute to this learning process. Please stay in communication and send us your ideas. Katharine Cahn [cahnc@pdx.edu](mailto:cahnc@pdx.edu)

# Tribal Child Welfare

by Mary McNevens, Oregon ICWA Manager

The past year has been exciting and full of activity involving the Oregon Tribes, Department of Human Services Indian Child Welfare, and the PSU Rural Training Grant. One of the goals was to strengthen relationships and partner on joint training opportunities.

The best way to think of this is in the work we do with families and applying our Goals and Guiding Principles for Training Collaboration.

## GOALS:

- Relationship Building/Collaboration
- Shared Training Opportunities
- Inviting Community Partners
- Utilize National Resource Centers
- Rural Training Grant
- Utilizing Service Integration

## Guiding Principles for Training Collaboration

- Active Efforts in Building Partnerships
- Culturally Competent Relationships
- Shared Training Opportunities
- Skill Building Practice
- Follow up/Action Plans
- Involvement of the Community
- Building Trust Between Partners
- Sharing Expertise
- Active Learning
- Focus on Strengths
- Culturally Competent Workers
- Provide Learning Activities Close to Home
- Accessing Technology
- Transfer of Learning

## Indian Child Welfare Safety & Risk Assessment Training

In April 2005, DHS Indian Child Welfare, PSU Rural Training Grant and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde collaborated on the “Indian Child Welfare Safety & Risk Assessment Training” that was provided by the Resource Center on Child Maltreatment-Action for Child Protection, to convene a two-day Training Institute. The training was on the “Indian Child Welfare Safety Decision-Making Curriculum”. This was a follow up to the three-day training Institute that was held in May of 2004. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde hosted the Child Safety Training and invited all of the Oregon Tribes.

The next step and planning for the Tribal Child Safety & Risk Assessment curriculum is developing and implementing the culture of the Oregon Tribes, to better meet the needs of the Oregon Tribal staff and partners. A “Train the Trainers” will be held later in the year with identified OR tribal and DHS staff identified. Through this continued effort the curriculum will become our own and trainers will be available through out the state.

## Training Opportunities

ICWA Conference:

Location: Cow Creek, Roseburg, OR

Pre-Conference: “Collaborating for Children: Government to Government” Sept 27

Conference: “Building for the Future of Indian Children and Families” Sept 28-29

NICWA Online

50 slots are available in NICWA’s online curriculum. ICWA Liaisons are encouraged to complete this course which gives clear explanations and recommended performance steps regarding ICWA cases. Contact Judy Miller for more information.



“I like this rural area because we have a culture that acknowledges who the people are as demonstrated by their way of day to day living and respecting their cultural way of working towards living a healthy life”  
-- Bethel, AK

“This lack of boundaries (for want of a better word) caused by living in such close proximity gives way to know when something is happening before it even happens. Accessibility is both the gift and the curse of rural casework”

-- Lakeview, OR



# New Team Member

Kirstin O'Dell

Greetings! My name is Kirstin O'Dell. I am happy to be the new evaluator for the Rural Training Grant and training evaluator for the Child Welfare Partnership at Portland State University. For the past seven and one-half years I have conducted research and evaluation at the Child Welfare Partnership in the areas of child welfare and early childhood. Some my projects included: Oregon's Title IV-E Waiver Evaluation, Powerhouse Transition Study, and Oregon! Ready to Learn Evaluation. My educational background is in social work. I have a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Kentucky and a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Lewis-Clark State College. Outside of my professional life, I keep busy with family life. My husband is a high school social studies teacher and wrestling coach in Salem. We have two young children, Dominic (age 3) and Rebecca (age 1).

I am excited to begin working with you and to learn more about the work you are doing! Although training is a new field for me, I am eager to learn about your experience with training and its application in rural settings.

Please feel free to contact me anytime with questions, ideas, or just to introduce yourself at 503-399-5152 or [odellk@pdx.edu](mailto:odellk@pdx.edu).

## Keeping the Lines Open

Rural Express is published twice a year, in late Spring and Late Fall - if you have a bit of child welfare training news or announcement for the next issue, please mail or email it to one of the editors below: Comments, questions or suggestions about the newsletter are also welcome!

Rural Training Grant  
520 SW Harrison St. #440, Portland, OR 97201  
Judy Miller 503.589.7874 [jmille99@chemeketa.edu](mailto:jmille99@chemeketa.edu)  
Troy Lakey 503.399.2579 [tlakey@chemeketa.edu](mailto:tlakey@chemeketa.edu)



**Check out the Rural Training  
Grant Website:  
[www.rtg.pdx.edu](http://www.rtg.pdx.edu)**

“If you want to watch the children you have been involved with grow up, if you want to be a part of a family during both the worst of times and the best of times, and if you want a chance to see how you have made a difference in the long run, rural casework is the practice of choice”  
-- Lakeview, OR



“If you like people, you enjoy learning about other ways of doing things, including other cultures, and like to be creative and flexible in your work, you will love rural child welfare.”  
-- Bethel, AK



“Rural child welfare work can be overwhelming and stressful, but very gratifying. It can be more time consuming, going to trainings or out on calls can take a lot of time due to distance.” -- Gold Beach, OR

“I just started and am very excited about the amazing work being done. I am also able to come full circle to my roots, I grew up on a farm in the Midwest. I look forward to the beautiful sights/scenery I will see just around the bend as I travel.  
-- Enterprise, OR



# Distance Delivery - Reaching Out to You

Distance delivery training uses three primary methods to reach you; synchronous (real time), asynchronous (any-time/self-paced) and blended (combination). NetLink is a DHS synchronous training tool that delivers training right to your computer via the internet. There are definite advantages to doing training at your desk, like no travel! However doing training in the office makes it easier to be distracted or pulled into work, so protect your time. This convenience leads to a lot of cancellations and no shows - which is frustrating when the class is full, so no one else can participate. So far, this year, 44% of those who participated in Partnership NetLinks were from a rural office. The Child Welfare Partnership has offered the following NetLinks: Developing an Emergency Placement, Guardianship as a Permanency Choice, Matching Children's Needs to Family Strengths, Challenging Teens: Practical Solutions and Transitioning Children with Sensitivity. We will continue to develop new trainings, one that will premiere this summer is Promoting Permanency for Children: the Importance of Caseworker Contact. Check the Child Welfare Partnership's NetLink website for information! [www.cwpsalem.pdx.edu/netlink](http://www.cwpsalem.pdx.edu/netlink)

The Grant has also used WebCT, a blended distance delivery tool, to take training to the field. WebCT has a set time period to complete the assignments but you do it on your schedule. There are also discussion board postings and live chat sessions (synchronous) within the WebCT tool. The Grant partnered with Portland State University's Extended Studies to sponsor a class "Current Issues for Rural Social Services Professionals" Spring Term 2005. Twenty four individuals enrolled in the class, twelve were funded by the Grant. Course objectives included: 1) Identify and develop an understanding of the issues that are unique to rural social services; 2) Examine dual/multiple relationships that are common in rural social services; 3) Learn ways to protect clients and social service professionals from negative consequences of dual relationships in rural settings; and 4) Explore cultural considerations in rural social services. The course will be offered again Fall Term 2005. Contact Judy Miller for more information.

The Rural Training Grant will continue to explore ways to bring training to you in the field. Please share your ideas and feedback with us in this area so we can continue to serve your training needs. Thank you.

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