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SHO-BAN NEWS

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*Telling the stories that honor our past,
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Elders educated, honored at conference

By LORI ANN EDMO
& JOSEPH WADSWORTH
Sho-Ban News

FORT HALL — The Twelfth Annual Taking a Stand Against Elder Abuse conference May 14 to 16 at the Shoshone-Bannock Casino Hotel had close to 400 attendees and 42 tribes in attendance.

Conference coordinator Marcia Hall said, “I was very pleased with the overall outcome of the conference. Participants voiced their excitement for next year’s event.”

She said people appreciated the presentations from the invited speakers. “I was truly honored to have Bob Johnson deliver such an amazing story on his road to sobriety and his commitment to the community and family. I’m also very thankful to have Melanie Two Eagle Black Bull and staff present the Talking Circles, inter-tribal fashion show, and presentation on their senior centers in Porcupine and Pine Ridge.” She also said Carla Eben presented an impressive documentary addressing Alzheimer’s and Dementia from Pyramid Lake.

“It’s a lot of work, but I’m happy that people get the information on drug trends, current fraud and scams, dementia signs, senior service information, sobriety information, healthy living standards, physical therapy options, and networking beyond tribal nations in one setting is success!”

Hall said each year, they add more friends to the event and so it’s like a reunion.

THHS Director Travis Martin presented the Elder Awards May 16.

Vera Snipe received the Best Elder Volunteer award and Vivian Wahtomy got the Best Elder Caregiver award. Katie Denny and



Klamath Tribes elders in the parade. (Joseph Wadsworth photos)



THHS Director Travis Martin with Audrey Jim, who received a certificate of appreciation.

Dan Hall both received the Award of Appreciation for their unwavering support and dedication also their hard work and commitment.

Audrey Jim and

Marcia Hall both received a Certificate of Appreciation. Others that was not present who also received award of appreciation was Alvina Thomas along with Celia “Sally” Parris.

Workshop teaches about caring for camas



LCPD's Bailey Dann and Idaho BLM Tribal Liaison Susan Filkins present at the May 18 Tamme Pasigo Maviziakande (we take care of camas) workshop. (Lori Ann Edmo photos)



Participants made their own bodo, or digging stick. (Olivia Yokoyama photo)

By LORI ANN EDMO
Sho-Ban News

FORT HALL — Participants at the May 18 Tamme Pasigo Maviziakande (we take care of camas) workshop were encouraged to learn how to rid the invasive grass Garrison’s creeping meadow foxtail that is choking out the traditional food source at the Camas Prairie near Fairfield.

They also learned about the Bannock War of 1878 history that started because of settlers pigs digging up the roots on the Prairie when Buffalo Horn and his warriors led the campaign into Oregon and Montana. Nolan Brown, Original Territories and Historical Research manager, gave a



Invasive grass shown.

PowerPoint presentation on the subject.

Now the Tribes are waging a second Bannock

War and this time it’s on the invasive grass called Garrison creeping

See CAMAS, page 10

Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe film focuses on dementia awareness

By ROSELYNN YAZZIE
Sho-Ban News

FORT HALL – The 12th annual “Taking the Stand Against Elder Abuse” conference aims to educate on various topics affecting seniors, such as dementia.

The issue was presented by Carla Eben, Numaga Senior Services Director for Pyramid Lake, Nev. who showed the film, “Finding Pesa Soomame: The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribes Story of Identity, Community, and Dementia.”

In 2017 Eben attended a training on dementia and hoarding, at the end of the session she asked if the information presented was given to Nevada tribes and Indian Country. The answer was, “Yes, but they never come.” She aims to change that.

She reached out to Indian Health Service and they didn’t provide

dementia training, so she contacted the University of Nevada Reno (UNR) and with their excitement, began the journey.

She applied for the Dementia Friendly Nevada, Pyramid Lake Pesa Soomame grant in 2018. They’re the only tribe in the country to apply and be awarded the grant, which they hosted several information sessions and had the first annual Nevada Tribal Summit on Brain Health & Dementia in 2019. In 2023 they hosted a second summit after the COVID pandemic.

“We never stopped with our efforts of raising awareness in Indian Country, even though the grant ended in 2020,” she said.

In 2022 her co-facilitator with Pesa Soomame, Casey Acklin, had the idea for a film about dementia for his Master’s Thesis

Class at the UNR. They approached the Pyramid Lake Tribal Council for their permission to film at Pyramid Lake and the elders who volunteered. After completing the project, they presented it to the tribal council for their final approval to share with the public.

So far, they’ve had showings at the 70th Annual Society on Aging Conference and the World Alzheimer’s Conference, in addition to two viewings on the Pyramid Lake reservation and now Fort Hall.

The 34-minute feature starts with storytelling of how Pyramid Lake was formed and the history of its tribal people.

Eben talked about her grandmother, who always taught them about their origins.

The importance of elders and their teachings



Carla Eben, Numaga Senior Services Director for Pyramid Lake, Nev. at the Taking a Stand Against Elder Abuse Conference on May 15. (Roselynn Yazzie photo)

was emphasized while bringing up seeing families struggling to care for their loved ones who have dementia.

Those interviewed during the film talk about the need to look after and protect those with dementia. It’s said that Native families can step up and

be ready to help individuals living with dementia by being educated. The elders are important to the community as they are the ones who carry the knowledge and culture. They talked about “elderhood” and how it is a noble status in the community.

Elders share thoughts

on growing older and being knowledge carriers and what that means to them.

The interviewees spoke about their first experiences with loved ones who had dementia. Eben talks about her grandmother, who was never diagnosed, but showed signs of forgetting who her family was. It was said it’s common that no one talks about someone having dementia, as their behavior is dismissed for them getting older. Furthermore, not many get diagnosed.

Another interviewee talked about her father who was diagnosed, but how she never heard of anyone else.

Another responded only knowing of two elders who were diagnosed with dementia.

In the film, it states that Native people are three times more likely to

See DEMENTIA, page 10

From page one

CAMAS, continued

meadow foxtail that is currently present on 25 to 30% of the prairie that has potential to double every five years according to Terry Gregory, researcher and former Wildlife Management Area (WMA) manager.

The Camas Prairie was included in the 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty but the area was excluded because of a stenographer error spelling it Kansas Prairie.

The Prairie was also noted in the Long Tom Creek Treaty when Chief Taghee said he wanted the right to camp and dig roots on the

Camas Prairie when going to Boise City to trade. "Some of my people have not horses. They can remain at Camas Prairie and dig roots while others go on," he said in historical records.

Regardless, the Camas Prairie still has great significance to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes as tribal members still return their in late May and June to dig the camas root as it's considered a traditional food staple. According to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Language and Culture Preservation Department in the Shoshone and Bannock language pa-

sigo and tsuga are the words for camas.

Garrison's creeping meadow foxtail is a long-lived cool season perennial grass first introduced in the late 1800s as a pasture grass from Eurasia. It grows three to six feet tall and forms in groups through underground stems (rhizomes). It was planted in the Camas Prairie Centennial Marsh (CPCM) and surrounding areas for forage, hay production and erosion control. Idaho doesn't recognize it as invasive but tribal members who annually harvest have noticed it.

Much discussion occurred about the grass and methods to get rid of it.

Susan Filkins, Idaho BLM Tribal Liaison, said riding it is a 20 to 30 year project because they don't want to use chemicals because it would affect the camas.

Idaho Fish and Game manage the Wildlife Management Area. The Tribes are working with IF&G, Natural Resources Conservation Center, the Bureau of Land Management, Idaho State University and the Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides.

Yvette Towersap suggested since the Camas Prairie Centennial March is managed by the state, a bill should be presented to the Idaho Legislature recognizing the camas as a unique

plant so that gives more authority to tell the federal and state agencies to protect the plant.

Zelphia Towersap also expressed concerned about yampa and sunflowers and how it's declined in the area.

It was also suggested to find another location near the prairie to plant camas. LCPD Director Louise Dixey said they found out IDF&G acquired property through Bonneville Power mitigation funds where the Tribes can access the land and plant additional camas. There's also individuals on private land offering tribal members to harvest camas on their property.

Filkins brought live

plants of the invasive grass to show how to pull the plants when going to the Camas Prairie Homecoming May 31 and June 1. It will take multiple trips to the area to continue to pull the invasive grass. She also showed the seed heads that will need to be removed.

NRCS has also looking at changing the ratio of the Garrison's seed mix applied in the area because farmers and ranchers feed it to their cows.

After a lunch of deer roast, Bannock bread and fruit was served. In the afternoon a bodo or digging stick class was conducted so participants could make their own.

DEMENTIA, continued

develop dementia.

The Alzheimer's Association says 1 in 3 native American elders will develop Alzheimer's or some other form of dementia. Between 2020 and 2060 the number of American Indian/Alaska Native individuals 65 and older living with dementia is projected to increase four-fold. 61 percent of Native Americans say that affordability of care is a barrier.

According to the Mayo Clinic, dementia is a term used to describe a group of symptoms affecting memory, thinking, and social abilities. The symptoms interfere with their daily lives.

Dementia generally involves memory loss, but having memory loss alone doesn't mean you have it, as there can be other causes. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of de-

mentia in older adults, but there are many causes.

Common symptoms include memory loss; problems communicating or finding words; trouble with visual and spatial abilities; problems with reasoning or problem-solving; trouble performing tasks; trouble planning or organizing; poor coordination and control of movements; confusion and disorientation; personality changes; depression; anxiety; agitation; inappropriate behavior; being suspicious, or paranoid; seeing things that aren't there, or hallucinations.

Eben said one of the things that bothers her most in her outreach is people are not getting diagnosed if they suspect dementia. Benefits of a diagnosis is finding out what kind you may have and also to help one plan for future care.

One lady speaks of her connection with dementia

through her mother and how it affected her by allowing her to show compassion.

"We all go through things as we get older," she said. "I think it just created more of an understanding to have more patience. Taking more time, but I really valued those last years and took my mom to as many places as I could to enjoy life and appreciate it."

They talked about what families can do to help care for loved ones with dementia, such as being supportive, making them comfortable, not to baby them, and honor them as a person.

People living with dementia can contribute to others by sharing their personal history, some of them remember things from long ago and they may talk about it. They may also still speak the language. This is a time for young people to listen and learn from them.

The early times of when reservations were established and how they caused historical trauma were discussed. It was said there's a connection between historical trauma and dementia.

It was explained, "As long as we have a trauma and it's unresolved, it's not been dealt with. People choose to forget, at least for what I see, with Native people it really compounds that dementia and may progress to other stronger forms or serious forms of forgetfulness."

Healing historical trauma can be done by working on wellness, which is the concept of being holistically healthy in mind, body, spirit, and heart. This must start individually and can catch on to parents who teach their children how to live well, and it may start a ripple effect.

"Pesa Sooname" was

defined as to have good thought, to think with a good mind.

Some suggested ways to help people with dementia was to not have them focus on bad memories, but to make good memories, discuss concerns with them, don't keep them hidden, be aware of the illness, and learn more about it.

Find resources available, such as faith-based organizations, the Idaho Commission on Aging, and local chapters of the Alzheimer's Association, there's also nonprofit organizations; local and state government or tribal services and programs; federal government resources, and paid services.

Eben said 2023 was a hard year for her, she lost her aunt, was diagnosed with breast cancer, had it removed and radiation. She was also diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

Through it all, she never stopped working and kept a smile on her face. She's driven by wanting to plant seeds for dementia awareness and challenged the audience to do the same, in learning about dementia, elder abuse, and fraud, and carrying the knowledge back to their communities.

"Share what you learned and watch it grow," she said. "You don't have to be an expert, be an advocate."

Eben's hope is to see more tribes join the effort to do more for their aging elders in regards to dementia services.

"Finding Pesa Sooname: The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribes Story of Identity, Community, and Dementia" film is not available to the public yet. Eben and Acklin are considering submitting it to be viewed at upcoming film festivals.



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