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Warm Springs Community Library: Finding a Home

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My interest in starting a tribal library began in the early 1990s, when tribal parents frequently requested tutoring assistance and study support for their school-age children. In 1990, Central Oregon Community College had an adult learning center, which provided GED classes in the tribal community center. A book collection was available for student use and checkout. Eventually, the COCC program moved and the books were stored in a tribal warehouse.

I was at the Grand Ronde tribal administration building for a meeting when I saw a very small library area and asked how the small collection was supported. That is when I learned about the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Native American Library Services grants. Later, I attended a child care conference in Seattle and toured a Family Resource Center facility. Services included a child care center, adult learning center, and library. Meanwhile, I had insistent phone calls from the warehouseman asking what I was going to do with the books taking up space in his warehouse.

I immediately applied for a Basic Grant for Indian Tribes from IMLS, which provided \$4,000 annually to support tribal libraries. This was \$4,000 more than I had ever had to support the library. I purchased bookshelves, study carrels, chairs, workstations, and books. I set up a very small library, again at the tribal community center, thinking that students would have a designated area to study. The library was unsupervised other than my twice-weekly visits to organize shelves and clean the area. Vandalism and theft were a problem. The old electrical wiring could not accommodate a public-use computer and I quickly realized that this site was not the best place for a library.

I wrote and received a grant to fund an Early Head Start program and set aside

\$210,000 for the remodel of the old Indian Health Service (I.H.S.) building. Another \$400,000 for building renovation was available from another source. The remodel project took over a year to complete. In the meantime, I was in discussions with the state Department of Human Resources to facilitate access for reservation residents to state services. The state office was located fifteen miles off the reservation and difficult for many to get to.

Finally, the Family Resource Center was created and a home was found for the library. Co-located programs include a state office for assistance programs, an Early Head Start program, and health promotion services. The Warm Springs Community Action Team, a non-profit community organization, is also currently located in the facility. The center has two cost-free meeting rooms and a kitchen for public use.

In 2004, I submitted my third (two were previously unsuccessful) IMLS Enhancement grant and was awarded \$150,000 for a two-year project to support basic library development. Writing two failed IMLS grants prompted me to seek the help of professionals. I was not afraid to ask for help from librarians from the county, as well as from Oregon State University. They provided proofreading, editing, and recommendations to strengthen the grant. Using all resources available and accepting help made all the difference with our third submission. Receiving the IMLS Enhancement grant provided me with an opportunity to meet professional librarians and access to an extensive resource network. It opened up an entirely new world for me and impressed me with the depth and breadth of library science. It reminded me of how little I really know about starting a library, but at the same time encouraged me to persist.



Services to American Indians, chaired by Kelly P. Webster.

Special thanks to Carlene Engstrom, Director, Salish-Kootenai Tribal College Libraries, and Dr. Lotsee F. Patterson, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Oklahoma.

Warm Springs Library

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Today, the library employs a part-time Library Aide and is administered by the K-12 Education Support Services department. Funding continues to be a challenge. The facility is provided at no cost by the tribal government. Our primary funding source is IMLS. We have received cash support for personnel from the Warm Springs Community Action Team. Thanks to generous book donations from Sunriver, Tygh Valley, Maupin, and Jefferson County libraries, we have books on our shelves. The Willamette Writers organization and private donors from New York City and Connecticut

frequently send new or nearly new books and donations. An organization, Libraries of Eastern Oregon, donated equipment for loan to our patrons.

Now, my dream is that our library will provide the opportunity for tribal community members to access information and apply knowledge in order to reach their full potential for the benefit of our reservation and future generations. 🌿

IMLS Native American Library Services Grants: <http://www.ims.gov/applicants/grants/nativeAmerican.shtml>

ALA and Tribal Libraries

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suggestions. Finally, please consider nominating yourself or a colleague to serve on an ALA committee. You will find my online

committee appointment volunteer form at <http://cs.ala.org/roy/volunteer.html>. 🌿

Oregon Collaborative Project

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Institute of Museum and Library Services, sponsored by the Western Council of State Libraries, and hosted by the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. 🌿

For more information about the Oregon Collaborative Project, please contact MaryKay Dahlgreen at: marykay.dahlgreen@state.or.us or (503) 378-5012.

