



## April is Child Abuse Awareness Month

Each year, the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) raises awareness of Child Abuse in April. The Klamath Tribes are showing solidarity for this effort by displaying signs and blue pinwheels at Tribal Administration. The Social Services Department is encouraging staff, tribal and community members to show solidarity for this cause.

- Please **wear blue** Friday, April 15, 2022. Send a picture, to Dalene McNair by 4/18/2022, via email at: [dalene.mcnair@klamathtribes.com](mailto:dalene.mcnair@klamathtribes.com). Photos will be compiled to generate a publication to acknowledge all those who participated.
- As an extra challenge this year, we are also encouraging parents to **tell your child what you love about them** each day in April.



We would like to say *thank you* to all who participated last year.



### *Message from the Klamath Tribes CFS Program*

The majority of Klamath child welfare cases opened are a result of a combination of the following: threat of harm due to domestic violence between parents or partners within the child's home; and safety concerns due to alcohol and substance abuse, mental illness, and neglect. Currently and historically, physical and sexual abuse of Klamath Tribal children is approximately 10% of the overall child welfare cases involving Klamath Tribes families.

Oregon Child Welfare receives reports of child abuse or neglect through the Oregon Abuse Hotline, 855-503-7233. If the report reaches a significant level of concern, it is assigned to the DHS District Office of the child's county of residence, to conduct an assessment to investigate the reported concerns. If the report involves a Tribal child, the DHS must do due diligence to notify the child's Tribe before contact is made.

The Klamath Tribes, Children & Family Services (CFS) Program receives hotline reports; are notified of active and closed assessments; schedule Tribal staff to accompany DHS assessments within Klamath County; and advocate for tribal families in accordance with ICWA and the CFS Program Standards. The CFS Program advocates in child welfare planning meetings and court for tribal and cultural services to ensure safety of the child. Unless the assessment determines physical or sexual abuse of the child has occurred, the CFS Program advocates to keep the child in their home and removal is the last resort. If the child must be removed, the CFS Program advocates the child is placed with a relative or tribal foster home.

January 2021, The CFS Program prioritized program expansion; increasing service capacity and defining Program Standards. January 2022, the Klamath Tribes CFS Program became the first Tribe to have their Prevention Plan approved by their Tribal Council and submitted to State of Oregon; to provide prevention services to Tribal families. April 2022, open child welfare cases are the lowest they have been since 2013! The overall percentage of open child welfare cases within Klamath County has declined from 65% in 2018, to 33% today.

Since 2017, there has been ongoing collaboration between the DHS and The Klamath Tribes Tribal Council, General Manager, and Social Services Department. In less than two years, the local DHS District 11 and CFS Program have collaborated on several initiatives to improve outcomes for Tribal families including: ICWA docket soon to be an ICWA Court; ICWA Citizen's Review Board; Family Coach; Tribal Certifier; Peer/Parent mentors; and ongoing consultation to integrate the Tribes recommendations in case planning. DHS Tribal Affairs Unit frequently consults with Klamath Tribes CFS Program and other Oregon Tribes for implementation of ORICWA, projects, and other initiatives to improve outcomes for Tribal families.

*The spirit of ICWA is to keep tribal families together.*