

Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians receive grant for Corning schools

By Heather Hoelscher, Daily News

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Corning >> The Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians were awarded a more than \$14.6 million Promise Neighborhood Grant on Dec. 20 to be dispersed over the span of five years from the US Department of Education to serve the Corning elementary and high school districts.

The Paskenta will reorganize their community's elementary and high school programs to ensure all students are prepared to master grade-level content, according to a media report by the Department of Education, which awarded five other grants as part of the 2016 Promise Neighborhood competition.

The program was set up to help communities launch, scale and sustain educational supports and community-based services to meet the complex needs of children and families, according to the report. The program is meant to serve and support at-risk children in these communities.

Schools that will benefit from the grant are Olive View, Rancho Tehama and West Street elementary schools, Maywood Middle School, Corning High School and Centennial High School.

The Everett Freeman Promise Neighborhood Initiative grant will go toward six solutions, or programs, that will significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth within various schools in Corning, said Matthew Russell, grant project director.

Those programs include the Healthy Families America program for ages 0-5, a Research Based Instruction program for kindergarten through eighth grade, Navigate program for high school students, College and Career Readiness program, Life Skills Training for sixth to twelfth grades and a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy program for children and parents, Russell said.

“The Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians received a smaller grant in 2012 that helped them lay the groundwork for improved outcomes for children and families,” said Nadya Chinoy Dabby, the US Department of Education's assistant deputy secretary for innovation and improvement. “We are excited about their continued progress toward establishing high-quality educational, mental health and house services for tribal youth.”

The Paskenta are the only tribal group to be awarded the grant, Russell said.

The Healthy Families Program includes working with the Tehama County Health Services Agency for health education purposes, the research program will focus on improving reading, writing and math skills for elementary and middle school students, the Navigate program will aim to create a culture of college preparedness that focuses on academics and post-secondary programs, the Life Skills Training will focus on education about substance abuse and violence prevention and the Cognitive Behavior Program will help fund additional counselors and certified therapists for students who have suffered from trauma and need additional help.

The college and career readiness program will focus on high school seniors, preparing them for future careers and education with extra opportunities while in high school, including increasing the number college counselors.

Russell said nearly 80 percent of students entering college in the county have to take remedial math and English classes. These classes could have been taken during high school to be able to move right into college-level classes freshman year of college. The program aims to change that.

The first year the tribe will receive \$2,705,168 to disperse to the various schools, the second year \$3,018,516, the third year \$3,054,516, the fourth year \$3,039,518 and the fifth year \$3,039,518. The total amount dispersed will be \$14,657,270.

The Tribal Council pushed hard to get the grant and was instrumental in being awarded this grant, Russell said. The other groups that also played a part in making the grant possible for Corning were the Tehama County Department of Education, Corning Union Elementary School District, Tehama County Health Services Agency, United Youth and Families, River Cities Counseling and Corning Union High School District.

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