



NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 29, 2009

For more information, contact:

Susan Sheoships, Education Coordinator

E-Mail: [tcj.education@tamastslíkt.org](mailto:tcj.education@tamastslíkt.org)

TEL (541)966-9748

TAMÁSTSLIKT CULTURAL INSTITUTE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE UMATILLA INDIAN RESERVATION

72789 Hwy 331

Pendleton, OR 97801

1H[www.tamastslíkt.org](http://www.tamastslíkt.org)

## “Through the Eyes of the Eagle” Exhibit Opens at Tamástslíkt

(Mission, Oregon) “Through the Eyes of the Eagle: Healthy Living for Children” an exhibit developed by the Centers for Disease Control, opens June 19 and runs through September 20, 2009 at the Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute.

Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute will exhibit the 65 original watercolor illustrations that were the creative basis for a four-book set of children’s books that are being distributed across Indian country. For thousands of years, American Indians have told stories to pass on their history, knowledge, and culture to future generations. In the *Eagle Books*, a wise eagle is the tribal elder, who teaches traditional ways of health that children can remember and retell in their homes, schools, and communities

Randall Melton, Collections Curator, Tamástslíkt, urges the Tribal community to come out to the opening reception June 19 at 5:00 pm at Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute when big cutouts of the book characters will be displayed in the lobby for possible photo opportunities with children. “We’ve added a subtitle to our efforts, calling it the *Power of Culture and Our Traditional Wellness*. It’s a nod to the knowledge that we used to be healthy,” said Melton. “When we lived subsistence lives, we got a lot of exercise and ate healthy foods. We hope to achieve that same tradition of wellness again by intervening with young children to get more active and eat healthy foods. *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* is special because the kids will identify with characters that resemble themselves.”

Louise Shaw, CDC Officer, will come to the exhibit opening. The Kauffman Associates Inc. of Spokane WA will also be in attendance at the opening reception. JoAnn Kauffman, Nez Perce tribal member, won a contract with the Centers for Disease Control to support the public programming that goes along with the exhibit. Kauffman representative, Liz Henry, has followed the exhibit from Washington DC, New York City, to Albuquerque NM and the Great Lakes area. She is helping Tamástslíkt make plans for additional wellness activities that will take place with the CTUIR recreation program.

“As recently as 50 years ago, diabetes was rare among American Indians,” said Roberta Conner, Director, Tamástslíkt. “That’s certainly no longer the case. But the good news is that diabetes can be prevented and, as we learn from the *Eagle Books*, we can look to our elders and traditions for wisdom about living in a healthy way.”

Developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Diabetes Translation in collaboration with the Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee and the Indian Health Service, the "Eagle books" foster awareness about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity for diabetes prevention.

The stories continue the practice of traditional storytelling, while addressing a relevant health issue for contemporary American Indian people. Wise animal character and a clever trickster coyote are featured in the books and engage the lead character, Rain That Dances, and his friends in the joy of physical activity and healthy eating. Illustrations from two books in the series, "Through the Eyes of the Eagle" and "Plate Full of Color," "Knees Lifted High" and "Tricky Treats" will be showcased at Tamástslíkt.

Today diabetes type 2 is a scourge among Native people because they are twice as likely as their non-Native counterparts to get the disease. CDC statistics in recent years are alarming. Between 1994 and 2004 the rate of diabetes among Natives younger than 35 have doubled. Not only American Indians are seeing an increase in incidence of diabetes. Diabetes type 2 is also rising in the general population. The message of the exhibition transcends the Native audience.

Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute will offer free programming on First Fridays of the months featuring the eagle theme pictured in the storybooks. Blue Mountain Wildlife will be at Tamástslíkt from 1-5pm on June 5, August 22 and September 4<sup>th</sup>. Howard Postovit and the golden eagle Olga will be at Tamástslíkt from 1-5pm on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, August 7<sup>th</sup>, and August 22<sup>nd</sup>. These programs will be free and open to the public. Admission to the museum exhibits is free on the above dates.

The *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* events will culminate at Salmon Walk on August 22 at Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute with the distribution of Eagle books to participating families.

About Eagle Books. Two American Indian artists from Minnetonka, MN, collaborated in creating the illustrations. Patrick Rolo of the Bad River Band of Ojibwe, Wisconsin, has broad experience illustrating for newspapers, magazines, comic books, and courtrooms. As a painter, his works in oil hang in galleries in Minnesota and Washington. Lisa A. Fifield of the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin draws on time-honored American Indian tales and beliefs as inspiration. Her color palette is unique. Her art has been exhibited in numerous museums in the western United States.

The exhibition features the original artwork used for the vibrant illustrations in the *Eagle Books*, a four-book series written by Georgia Perez of Nambe Pueblo, NM. The author was inspired in part by telling stories to her three young grandsons. "Stories can allow the positive power of words to create a new empowering vision of the future and reshape the way one thinks about disease," she wrote.

Contact Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute at (541)966-9748 or visit [www.tamastslíkt.org](http://www.tamastslíkt.org) for more information. Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute is owned and operated by the

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Tamástslíkt is located at the very end of the main driveway of the Wildhorse Resort & Casino, 10 minutes east of Pendleton, Oregon. Tamástslíkt can be reached via Exit 216 off Interstate I-84 or by following the “Mission-LaGrande” sign south off Highway 11. In addition to the museum and interpretive center, Tamástslíkt operates a museum store, café, and meeting room rentals.