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PRESS RELEASE

Tribal Police, Elementary School Students Join to Clean Up Graffiti

May 7, 2010: The Fort Hall Police Department and Fort Hall Elementary School fifth graders are teaming up to remove graffiti from the old water treatment plant north of the school in Fort Hall.

Volunteers are sought for the graffiti cleanup project, which begins at noon on Friday, May 14. Paint and supplies will be provided.

The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, community members and school see the removal of the graffiti as a way of taking back the Fort Hall Reservation from gang-related activity that results in damage to property and community pride.

"All the gang-related graffiti presently painted on these buildings creates an eyesore not only in our community, but most importantly, it is an eyesore for our youth who attend the elementary school who have to see it every day," said Leslie St. Clair, coordinator of the Fort Hall Police Department's COPS Methamphetamine Initiative, which is supplying paint and supplies for the cleanup.

PRESS RELEASE

The tribes have been working closely with the non-profit organization Second Chance Grace, Inc., to develop a comprehensive anti-gang, anti-violence initiative for the community.

Second Chance Grace President Peter Vasquez says that keeping a community free of graffiti lets gang members know where they stand.

"As soon as graffiti goes up, it needs to be taken down immediately. It sends the message loud and clear that gang-related activity is not welcome here," said Vasquez.

The police took on the graffiti cleanup project after community members and parents expressed concern about the graffiti, but also expressed fear about possible retaliation from gang members if attempts were made to remove it, said police Captain Robert Moss.

For more information about the cleanup project, contact St. Clair at 236-1104.

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