

## TAMÁSTSLIKT CULTURAL INSTITUTE



Fort Shaw Women's Basketball Team

OPENING AT TAMÁSTSLIKT CULTURAL INSTITUTE

# BEAUTIFUL GAMES: American Indian Sport & Art

presented by CHI St. Anthony Hospital and  
C.M. Bishop, Jr. Family Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation

*For immediate release - Pendleton, Oregon*

Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute presents "Beautiful Games: American Indian Sport & Art" opening on August 3 through October 13. Opening day is free to the public.

Sports have played a pivotal role in American Indian tribal communities. And many contemporary sports played across cultures are rooted in traditional tribal sporting

games. Lacrosse and surfing have long been attributed to indigenous peoples, while other games such as cross-country running, racquetball, cross-country skiing and canoeing, although not exclusive to the Americas, evolved independently.

Despite the diversity of American Indian cultures, some games were widespread. The rules of a game might vary, but several games were popular in large regions of the West. American Indians occasionally incorporated games into religious ceremonies. Heavy betting was common with most games.

Native games are more than just games. They build body and spirit through exercise and are played by all age groups—children, youth, and adults. Many games have roots in ancestral tests of strength and sport that reinforced group cooperation and sharpened survival skills in often hostile environments. For warriors, the games helped maintain their readiness and combat skills between times of war.

Native athletes quickly gravitated to historic sports like baseball, basketball, football and rodeo, and many have excelled in modern sports. Tribal communities continue to be heavily interested in and involved in sports, particularly basketball, rodeo and running.

Competing in sports in tribal communities teaches cooperation, consensus, compromise and teamwork, all of which are pillars of indigenous societies. Athletes learn how to develop strategies and solve problems, patience, discipline, perseverance, trust, empathy, respect and control. These games and play are integral in helping prepare young people for adult responsibilities, and assist in mitigating conflict between individuals and communities alike.

Many American Indians have competed in the Olympic Games, and several have taken home the gold. In 1912, Native Hawaiian Duke Kahanamoku won a gold medal in swimming, and Jim Thorpe, Sac and Fox, won gold in the pentathlon and decathlon. More recent medalists are Billy Mills, Lakota, gold in distance running and Billy Kidd, Abenaki, silver and bronze in downhill skiing. Joe Tompkins, Tlingit, and U.S. Paralympian, gold medaled in downhill skiing in the 2005 and 2010 Paralympic World Cup.

There is also an artistic element to sports, which makes this a natural subject for discussion in that most human of institutions, museums. This exhibit features artwork, artifacts, history and discussions about sports and its role in tribal life.

For more information, go to [www.tamastsligt.org](http://www.tamastsligt.org).

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## About Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute

Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute is owned and operated by the [Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation](#). A Blue Star museum, Tamástslíkt is one of the many museums across the nation that offers free admission to families of active duty servicemen and women year-round. Tamástslíkt is also a member of the North American Reciprocal Museum ([NARM](#)) Association and offers free admission to members of participating museums.

In addition to the museum and interpretive center, Tamástslíkt operates a museum store, café, and offers meeting room rentals. Tamástslíkt is open six days a week, 10am-5pm, Monday-Saturday; closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Kinship Café is open from 11am to 2pm on the same days the museum is open.

Tamástslíkt is located at 47106 Wildhorse Boulevard at the far 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 onto Highway 331.

For more information, contact Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute at 541.429.7700 or visit [www.tamastslíkt.org](http://www.tamastslíkt.org).

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*Media: for more information, photos, interviews, please contact Michelle Liberty at [Attitude Marketing](#), 509.540.0931 or email [liberty@getattitude.net](mailto:liberty@getattitude.net).*

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