

Cody Bearpaw Performs for Health Careers for Natives

By NANCY BRELSFORD

What is Health Career Development's Key word these days?

Action!

Which is precisely why Health Careers asked Cody Bearpaw to promote getting into health careers for Alaska Natives. Cody's own life—describes—action of all kinds.

Part of this action will be a statewide tour of Alaska with a part of his country rock band. The group known as the First Americans may have a combination of any of these: drummer, bass, lead guitar, steel guitar, or banjo. The itinerary for the month of June is:

June 13-15: Tanana's Nuchalawoya

June 17: Kenai

June 19: Gulkana

June 21: Kotzebue

June 22: Nome

June 23-26: Fairbanks

June 27: Dillingham

June 28-July 2: Bethel area

That is by no means the end of the plans. The month of July is being planned to cover southeastern Alaska and part of the Aleutian Chain.

Cody has already sung his way

into the hearts of Anchorage residents. Those who have heard him want to hear him again. He's made a 30 minute documentary promoting health careers which will be distributed throughout the Bush. In cooperation with Sam Lamebull, assistant director of Health Career Development, and Moses Friendly, a young recruiter from Quinhagak, Cody has appeared at several high schools.

This team effort also brought them to the state rehabilitation for youth. He was more than happy to bring a breath of fresh life to McLaughlin Youth Center residents.

As a man of action, his personal

philosophy is: No matter what it is, it can be done. His own life history bears witness to this statement. What is being done now is being done by an American Indian.

Young people everywhere can look to him and say, "If he can do it, so can I."

Who is he and what has he done that is exciting? Cody is a full-blooded Indian who grew up on a farm in Montana.

This kind of background created a strong person, both physically and otherwise. At age 14, he became paralyzed from the neck down as a result of a rodeo accident. He was tossed in a broncobusting competition. His horse rolled over on him and broke his neck.

He was immobilized in a wheelchair for three years. What could he do? His mind, always active, became more so. He concluded that he had to make a living somehow. He decided, based on his country background, to become a doctor of veterinary medicine.

Veterinary medicine, like all branches of medicine, had pretty tough entrance requirements, but he made it. Entrance, stage left, Dr. Cody Bearpaw, D.V.M.!

How did he get another chance in life? It was such a freak accident that it makes me believe in miracles.

One sunny afternoon, as a guest at a summer garden party, his friends lifted him out of the wheelchair and sat him on the side of the diving board. A roly-poly little boy jumped onto the diving board to cannonball into the pool.

The vibrations bounced Cody into the water, into another chance at life. Miraculously, his fall into the pool jarred his neck bones into their proper resting place. Today, he jumps off buildings, crashes cars, and motorbikes for movie sequences.

Entrance, stage right, Cody, the stunt man, actor, singer! he does all equally well. As he said, "No matter what it is, it can be done."

Presently, Cody is playing with the idea of moving his own movie company to Anchorage. He added, "There are lots of stories to be filmed here. Why not have a James Bond on a dog sled?"

Cody voiced a concern as to the future roles of Alaska Natives. "Natives need to unite and forget their classification of tribe whether Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo, and just be a proud, united, Indian nation."

Cody Bearpaw is traveling in the villages at the moment. Although the AFN, Inc. sponsored his presentations recently, Cody has to pay his own way while performing in the villages.