

You Don't Have to be a Kid to Laugh and Play!

by Jesse Bradley

No, you don't have to be a kid in order for it to be okay if you laugh so hard it makes your side hurt. Even adults get the giggles...and if they happen to be drinking milk, well, then it just comes flying out - no matter what age you are!

Gte Ga Nēš invited parents and grandparents to a spaghetti dinner (they won't soon forget!) which took place at the Indian Springs Lodge on February 22, 2006. The children were excited about their special evening with their families. They had been waiting and waiting since the dinner had been rescheduled from the week before because of a snowstorm.

Tribal Chairman Harold Frank began the evening by welcoming the families and thanking them for attending the dinner with their little ones. He asked tribal elder Eugene Shawano Sr. to say the prayer. As Mr. Shawano began, he spoke of the time when he was young, about the importance of family and the importance of an education. As he remembered spending time with his grandparents and talking to them in his own language, he also shared his memories and experiences regarding his education. Mr. Shawano stressed how valuable an education is and the blessings that it brings to one's life. He explained how being educated breaks down all barriers and even seems to alleviate people's differences - including one's color. As he went on to say the prayer in his own language, his words had made their impact.

As everyone began to sit and eat together, the children became more restless in their chairs. The room was full of their families and friends from school; they were just too happy to sit still. The one thing that you can always count on with children is that they act out their feelings. There's no 'reserve' and no need to wonder how they are feeling- it's usually pretty obvious. Luckily, none of them were in a bad mood!

Noticing that the children were searching amongst each other for some sort of entertainment, Fred Turk decided it



Fred Turk.

was best to get started with his show. Turk is a musician and puppeteer who uses his banjo and puppets with his songs to keep people of all ages laughing and enjoying his show. His songs pertained to topics that children relate to best including family, school and animals. His songs had the entire room participating. All the children of Gte Ga Nēš eagerly and willingly became a part of his show. There were no shy eyes, no hesitation at all. They were thrilled to help him and participate in his songs.

Turk's grand finale was when he pulled the parents and grandparents out of their chairs and helped them remember what it's like to play and be silly. It's good to smile and healthy for you too, so there was no getting out of it when Turk handed participants funny hats to wear. The hats portrayed farm animals of different sorts. As everyone came up to the front of the room wearing their new head gear, the music began! It was "Old McDonald Had a Farm," and it was time to sing....on cue!

The children were just tickled as the adults joined in on all the fun. They had a wonderful evening laughing and playing with their friends and family.



Fred Turk started them out, and the children of Gte Ga Nēš used their hand puppets to sing along!



Dancing Queens!



We were helping Turk with the music!



Parents and grandparents joined Turk in singing "Old McDonald had a Farm"...but first they had to get into character!



They might be having a little too much fun.