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NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Powwow coordinator Melanie Sandoval, (406) 728-7989.

30TH ANNUAL KYI-YO POWWOW COMING TO UM

MISSOULA--

During the past 30 years, the Kyi-Yo Powwow at The University of Montana-Missoula has grown from a cub of an event into something as vital as a full-grown bear. That's fitting, since kyi-yo means "grizzly" in Blackfeet.

This year's 30th annual Kyi-Yo Powwow, honoring American Indian UM graduates, will be held Friday and Saturday, April 24-25, at the Harry Adams Field House. Everyone is welcome, and admission is \$2 per session or \$5 for all three sessions over the weekend. It costs \$2 to register for dance contests. Drummers, elders, children under 6 and UM volunteers will be admitted free.

"This is the premier university powwow in Montana," said Melanie Sandoval, event coordinator and a UM senior majoring in elementary education. "It's also one of the oldest and largest university powwows in the state."

Grand entries, featuring dancers dressed in traditional American Indian finery, will be held Friday at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 1 and 7 p.m.

Sandoval said the powwow will honor Bonnie Heavy Runner, founder and director of UM's Native American Studies program, who died last November after a six-year struggle with cancer. Heavy Runner was a fixture at past Kyi-Yo powwows, and events may be scheduled this year to honor her memory.

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The powwow will include traditional- and fancy-dance contests. Also, women will compete in a jingle-dress contest, and men will have a grass-dance contest.

"We usually get about 300 dancers," Sandoval said. "In the last few years, between 6,000 and 7,000 people have turned out for the powwow over the entire weekend, but there might be more this year."

This year's event will have a drum contest, a Saturday morning fun run and a tepee race, in which teams strive to erect a tepee as quickly and securely as possible under the watchful eyes of judges. Miss and Little Miss Kyi-Yo contests also will be held.

Registration for powwow events will be held from 6 to 10 p.m. Friday and from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday. For more information or to volunteer to help with the event, call (406) 243-2703 or write Kyi-Yo Native American Student Organization, The University of Montana, 600 E. University Ave., Missoula, MT 59812.

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