



The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Members of the Education Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council attend 5th Annual Gala for Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce to recognize 2008 American Indian Scholars in Denver. Pictured are board members of the Chamber and scholarship recipients. (Courtesy photo)

Navajo Council members attend Denver gala to recognize scholarship winners

Five of 13 scholarship recipients selected this year were Navajo

DENVER — Members of the Education Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council attended the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce's 5th Annual Gala and participated in recognizing this year's selected 2008 American Indian Scholars.

"We were honored to have the Navajo Nation join us in recognizing our 2008 American Indian Scholars at the Rocky Mt. Indian Chamber of Commerce 5th annual gala," said Jackie Francke (Navajo), member of the board of directors for the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber in Denver. "With Native urban populations growing across the country, it is critical to develop pathways that bridge our tribal leaders with Native urban communities in order to develop economic, educational, and technological opportunities in Indian Country and expand employment opportunities for our Indian scholars as they enter the work place."

Bridging the gap between tribal governments and young Indian scholars was briefly talked about at the gala and several scholars expressed interest in returning back to their reservations to help their communities.

"It's important we show our support, especially for our young students attending college off the reservation," said Raymond Maxx (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi). "This also serves as an opportunity for us to speak with students and listen to their concerns."

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Five of 13 scholarship recipients selected this year were Navajo. This year's recipients included Sandra Hatchett (Ogala Lakota), Arnetta Harmann (Navajo), Amanda Campbell (Yupik Tribe in Alaska), Jaclynn Burch (Navajo), Kyle McIntosh (Choctaw), Ida Williams (Flandreau Santee Sioux), Jennifer Lee Williams (Sicangu Lakota-Rosebud Sioux), Erica Rosenberg (Hopi), Jamie Hopper (Northern Arapaho), Raymond Foxworth (Navajo), Crystal Loudhawk (Navajo), Ellinda McKinney-Jones (Potawatomi) and Vanessa Benally (Navajo).



Board members of the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce pose for a picture with Champion Hoop Dancer during the 5th Annual Gala to recognize Native American scholars. From left, Ken Szelliga, Colleen Brave, Josh Runningwolf, Dee St. Cyr, Debbie Emhoolah-Sankey, Jackie Francke and Ron Mack. (Courtesy photo)

The Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan thanked members of the Education Committee for attending the gala on behalf of the Navajo Nation and praised the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber for their commitment to helping Native American students.

"The cost of education continues to rise each year, as do the requests for scholarships," said Speaker Morgan. "Unfortunately, as a result of the thousands upon thousands of scholarship requests the Navajo Nation receives every semester, the Nation struggles to meet requests from all our students, but organizations like the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber help to alleviate educational costs for our Native students. I hope other organizations will follow their example."

The delegates received special recognition from the Chamber and several Navajo recipients visited with them following the presentation of awards.

"Several students were happy to see members of the council here supporting their efforts," said Willie Tracey Jr. (Ganado/Kinlichee). "This gave us an opportunity to speak with some of them face to face and listen to their concerns."

Council Delegate Elmer L. Milford (Fort Defiance) said, "I'm proud to see our young Navajos pursuing education, as leaders, we are always encouraging our young people to pursue higher education."

The Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber is a 501(c) 6 nonprofit organization chartered to advancing Native American businesses through training, education and resources. Their scholarship program is another avenue, in which they support efforts in advancing Native American communities. In addition, the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber manages the American Indian Scholars License Plate program under the Colorado Indian Education Foundation, a 501(c)(6), available to Colorado residents.

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