



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie praises community teamwork efforts in the construction of new playground in Thoreau



Photo: Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (far left) speaks on the importance of teamwork during a dedication ceremony for a new community playground in Thoreau, N.M. on June 8.

THOREAU, N.M. – Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) praised Thoreau community members and volunteers for donating their time last Saturday to help build a new state-of-the-art playground for the local children at the local St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School.

Approximately 100 people, donning blue work shirts, showed up on-site early that morning on June 8, equipped and ready for the challenge of building the grant-funded playground within eight hours.

“It is very encouraging to note how involved and devoted the community of Thoreau and the St. Bonaventure School has been in providing the youth here with a place where they can play and be active,” Delegate Yazzie said.

Delegate Yazzie, a continual advocator for collaborative and unifying teamwork efforts, said he was elated that with the addition of the new playground in the community, Thoreau children would have a positive reason to spend time outdoors playing and socializing.

“Kids need a safe place where they can laugh, play, and engage in fun physical activity,” said Delegate Yazzie, who added that such activity is valuable in the prevention of youth depression.

In March, the school was informed that they were the recipient of a grant to build a playground from KaBOOM, a national non-profit organization dedicated to creating play spaces for children.

The BlueCross BlueShield of New Mexico stepped up as the main sponsor of the playground building project, and transported about 80 volunteers to the new play site that morning to assist with construction.

“In Thoreau, there is not a whole lot for young people to do, and we wanted to help bring an opportunity and let the community know that we care about them,” said Chris Halter, executive director for the St. Bonaventure school, which applied for the grant two years ago.

Halter said they planned and collaborated with many of the local Navajo chapter communities surrounding Thoreau on the project.

Along with support from Delegate Yazzie, Halter credited the local chapters for their help in generating donations and volunteers to make the project a successful reality.

“I’m excited for the kids in Thoreau,” said Delegate Yazzie. “Their community rallied together in unity to give them a place where fond childhood memories will surely be created.”

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