

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Tuesday, July 19, 2016

YOUTH COMPLETE APPRENTICE PEACEMAKER CURRICULUM

Earlier this year, the Peacemaking Program, under the Judicial Branch of the Navajo Nation, developed a Peacemaking curriculum for young people and recruited youth between the ages of 11-17 years old to participate in an apprenticeship program. Now, more than 50 young people have completed the curriculum to become Youth Apprentice Peacemakers.

The accomplishments of the Youth Apprentice Peacemakers will be celebrated during a ceremony at Diné College Student Activity Room, on July 29, 2016, at 10 a.m., in Tsaile, Ariz.

These young people will work in their schools and communities on a peer-to-peer basis, with support and mentorship from Peacemakers and Program staff, to assist their fellow students in their search for identity, pride, and hózhó.

Through the curriculum, Peacemaking Program staff and Peacemakers shared culture and values with the young people and taught them important Navajo traditions. By doing so, the Program seeks to give them more opportunities to develop pride in their heritage and culture, and to live happy and healthy lives of hózhó.

Navajo Peacemaking is an important part of the Navajo justice system. Since time immemorial, the Diné people have used peacemaking as our traditional process when seeking justice and/or to resolve disputes. Deeply rooted in our cultural teachings and values, peacemaking is the respectful way of bringing people together as equals based on Fundamental Law, with the goal of restoring all participants to hózhó. Peacemaking reflects Diné values about true justice, including the participants' need to find balance in their community, among each other, and within their own spirit. The work of the Peacemaker is to use his or her position of respect in the community, their life experience, wisdom, and insight in guiding the participants to a just resolution while refraining from the use of coercion or force. This approach is fundamentally Diné, and reflects Navajo Fundamental Law and culture.

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