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## GRAND OPENING OF LITTLE FOLKS DAYCARE PROVIDES QUALITY ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN TO LEARN

NAVAJO, N.M.—During the Little Folks Daycare grand opening on May 2, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye thanked all involved for providing a safe and quality learning environment for Navajo children.

“The children who will be served at this facility are at a prime age for learning,” President Begaye said. “They soak up information and it’s up to us as parents and teachers to challenge them to learn.”

Little Folks Daycare will provide childcare services for children from ages 18 weeks up to 13 years old. According to Executive Director Marsha Smith, plans for the facility started 18 years ago, when she started developing a proposal.

“Planning started in 1998, with the vision that we needed to expand our childcare services. We didn’t have adequate room to do it. I submitted a proposal in 2003, which was picked for funding,” she said.

The new facility cost about \$5.5 million for construction. Navajo Housing Authority provided \$4.3 million and Abandoned Mine Lands provided \$400,000 from the Public Facilities Project funding that went toward construction costs for the gymnasium.

“The total was \$5.25 million, but when we add our matching funds it’s closer to \$5.5 million,” Smith said.

Ramsey Singer, Development Coordinator from NHA Grants Management Department, said he was glad they were able to be a part of the project.

“This is a small fraction of what we can do with NHA,” he said. “This is also why we fight for our children and have to spend our money wisely to benefit their development.”

Vice President Jonathan Nez said he was impressed with the gym equipment housed in the daycare. He said the Begaye-Nez Administration will continue to partner with these types of projects that benefit Navajo children.



Reverend Roscoe Smith, Vice President Nez, Executive Director Marsha Smith, and President Begaye stand with children and staff from the Little Folks Day-care facility.



Vice President Nez said the Begaye-Nez Administration will continue to support these types of facilities as they are in line with the administration’s four pillars.

“The kids will be exercising and keeping fit,” he said during the opening ceremony. “We support healthy living and wellness We support these types of facilities as they are in line with the administration’s four pillars.”

Smith said she really appreciated having President Begaye and Vice President Nez in attendance for the grand opening.

“This was an awesome day which took many years of planning and it was great to have our Navajo Nation leaders present for the dedication of this building,” she said.

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