



The Navajo Nation  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**President Nez encourages summer youth employment  
students to believe in themselves and to never give up**



**PHOTO:** Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez speaks to summer youth employment workers in Albuquerque, N.M. on July 18, 2019.

**ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.** – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez received a standing ovation from over 150 Navajo summer youth employment student workers, as he provided the keynote address during a youth banquet held in Albuquerque, N.M. on Thursday.

The student workers were hired to work at chapters across the Navajo Nation for the summer through the Navajo Department of Workforce Development, which was made possible with the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council and the Nez-Lizer Administration's appropriation of \$3 million for summer youth employment in June.

President Nez encouraged the students to never "give up" on life and to always remember the teachings of their elders and honor the resilience of their ancestors who survived tough challenges such as the Long Walk. When addressing the youth employees, he recalled the life changing atrocities that were inflicted on Navajo people prior to and during the Long Walk.

"I always say that when history is taught in classrooms, the history books are always missing the most important part of our history, which can instill hope in our people — the history of our people uniting, helping one another, using the power of prayer to come home after the Long Walk and years of captivity at Fort Sumner. Now look at our people today. We are the largest and most influential Indigenous nation in the world and it's because our ancestors didn't give up," said President Nez.

Speaking from his own personal experiences, President Nez challenged the students to be proud of who they are and where they come no matter what others may say or no matter what hardships they encounter in life such as the "modern day monsters" like alcohol and drug addiction, depression, or suicide.

"I may be talking about sensitive subjects for some of you because that may be your situation at home, but I'm telling you that you can overcome that and be a person that others can look up to. I see hope and the resilience of our ancestors in your eyes. Don't give up on life because life is great," President Nez stated.

Following his keynote address, President Nez spent time engaging with the student workers and thanking them for their service to their communities. Thursday's banquet was hosted by the Navajo Department of Workforce Development. He also thanked Navajo Nation Division of Human Resources Director Dr. Perphelia Fowler, who also offered supporting words and encouragement for the students at the start of the event.

The Nez-Lizer Administration also extends a special thank you to PNM Director of Tribal Government and Customer Engagement Cathy Newby for her support of the youth workers and their contributions to help inspire our Navajo youth.

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