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THE NAVAJO NATION

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Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., Delegate Alice Benally welcome Congressman Tom Udall to *T'iists'ozí* Child Care Center

CROWNPOINT, N.M. – Greeting him as a brother and son to the Navajo people, Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., welcomed Congressman Tom Udall, D-N.M., here for the dedication of the new *T'iists'ozí* Child Care Center.

“He’s gone to bat for us, fighting for the budget,” the President told about 30 people gathered inside the large, high-ceilinged, hogan-shaped multi-purpose room of the new center on Wednesday. “Not only for Navajos but for Native Americans all over the country.”

Also welcoming the Congressman was Nahodishgish-Crownpoint Council Delegate Alice Benally who said his visit to his Navajo constituents demonstrates his commitment.

“It shows to me that there’s sincerity in the representation of the Navajo people,” she said. “We still exist out here. Our health problems are still here. Our social problems are never-ending.”



Congressman Tom Udall visited the new T'iists'ozí Child Care Center during its dedication on Wednesday. Earlier in the day, Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., signed a proclamation declaring April as Navajo Nation Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The leaders were welcomed to the dedication by Program Supervisor Laura Daniels and Alfred Yazzie, the program supervisor for the Navajo Child Care and Development Fund Program.

President Shirley said that throughout his visits across the Navajo Nation, he’s not seen a building as beautiful at the new center.

“It’s remarkable,” said Congressman Udall. “I love the idea of the hogan style.”

The Congressman spent the morning in Crownpoint touring Diné College and made a presentation to Crownpoint High School students.

His visit to the child care center was to participate in National Child Abuse Prevention Month activities. Earlier in the morning, President Shirley signed a proclamations declaring April as Navajo Nation Child Abuse Prevention Month and Alcohol Awareness Month.

“You have a lot of wonderful things happening in this community,” Congressman Udall said. “I think all of you should be very proud about how Crownpoint is progressing.”

He said he recently learned that 60,000 Navajos are under the age of 13.

“You can see this is a very young nation,” he said. “Child care is such an important part of the whole equation. It takes a loving, caring attitude, just like the parents would give their child.”

Both President Shirley and Congressman Udall said getting at money through the federal budget is one of the hardest things to do, and will become harder in coming years.

“When we get the President’s budget, we really rely on President Shirley to tell us what’s wrong with that budget,” the Congressman said.



Baca/Dlo'ayazhi Turquoise Princess Serina Gaddy, her little sister Sebrina Molina and their mother Tammy Jones enjoyed the dedication of the new T'iists'ozí Child Care Center in Crownpoint where they met Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., and Congressman Tom Udall.



Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., greets Congressman Tom Udall at the dedication of the new T'iists'ozí Child Care Center in Crownpoint. Both leaders arrived at the same time and were able to share a few welcoming words.

He said he would work to keep money in the Child Care Development Fund, which allocated \$17 million to the Navajo Nation.

Mrs. Benally said funding is also needed for the Navajo Nation’s aging population.

“The dollars are disappearing for our elderlies,” she said. “We need nursing homes, youth treatment centers. Teachings begin in the home, the hogan, so that children can walk the path of the corn pollen in a straight way, and we need people in Washington to know that.”

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