



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Annual D.U.I. Checkpoint hosted by the Peshlakai Family and Navajo Nation Council brings awareness to drunk driving

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PHOTO: Law and Order Chairwoman Eugenia Charles-Newton joined Darlene Peshlakai, the Mothers Against Drunk Driving organization and the Santa Fe Police Department for the annual D.U.I. checkpoint.

SANTA FE, N.M. — On Sunday, Law and Order Chairwoman Eugenia Charles-Newton of the 24th Navajo Nation Council was joined by the Peshlakai family of Naschitti, N.M., the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) organization, and the Santa Fe Police Department for an annual D.U.I. checkpoint to prevent patrons from driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

In 2010, Deshauna and Del Lynn Peshlakai were killed in a car crash that was caused by a repeat drunk driver. Under the leadership of Darlene Peshlakai, the family has dedicated their time and effort to educating the public on drunk driving prevention by sponsoring rodeos, leading motorcycle bike runs, and hosting an annual basketball tournament to remember the daughters they lost.

“No parent should have to bury their child. My visit to the site in Santa Fe, where two beautiful young lives were lost, brought me to tears. I saw the pictures and heard the story from the Peshlakai family, who were devastated because an intoxicated person got behind the wheel. Darlene Peshlakai’s courage and love for her community and the Navajo people is so inspiring. We appreciate the Santa Fe Police Department and our public safety officers for their dedicated service to get drunk drivers off our highways,” said Madam Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock).

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In honor of the “Angels -vs.- Drunk Drivers” effort, New Mexico state and local police stopped drivers and administered sobriety tests at the intersection of Cerrillos and Cristo roads. It was estimated that around 200 vehicles were stopped Sunday night, with one individual apprehended. This marks the fifth year since 2015 the Peshlakai family has partnered with local law enforcement for the checkpoint.

“12 years ago, we experienced trauma in the middle of the night that no mother or father should ever experience. Healing is a word that I rarely trust because we are still hurting today. You don’t heal, especially when you lose two beautiful angels. Drinking and driving must come to an end. My family is grateful for our law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line to keep families safe,” said Darlene Peshlakai.

According to preliminary data from the New Mexico Department of Transportation, there have been 102 alcohol-related fatalities since 2020, with 24 occurring in the last three months. MADD also reported that statistically, Native Americans have the highest percentage of alcohol-involved driver, passenger, and pedestrian fatalities of any ethnic group in the country.

“It is nights like these when we work our hardest to get D.U.I. offenders off the roadway. Our officers are saving lives, and many of us are here during the Easter holiday so we can help the Peshlakai family. One life saved against a drunk driver is what matters. We thank the Navajo Nation for being our partners as we move forward to end DW.I.s,” added Officer Fernando Cruz.

On Wednesday, during the Navajo Nation Council Spring Session, Madam Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton and the Peshlakai family will host an awareness walk to end drunk driving, beginning at 8 a.m. from the Bashas Diné Market parking lot to the Council Chambers.

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