



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2019

First Lady and Second Lady highlight the importance of family at the “Strengthening Families” conference

TSAILE, Ariz. – Navajo Nation First Lady Phefelia Nez and Second Lady Dottie Lizer had the honor of hosting the “Strengthening Families through Healthy Practice” conference on Tuesday and Wednesday at Diné College in Tsaile, Ariz. The conference focused creating a nurturing environment for families and communities.

“Each of us, as parents, relatives, and teachers, have a responsibility to create a healthy environment for our families and communities that promotes optimal child and youth development. Creating parental resilience, cultural identity, kinship connections, support systems, knowledge of parent and child development, and faith can restore and heal families and communities,” said First Lady during her welcome address.



PHOTO: First Lady Phefelia Nez, Second Lady Dottie Lizer, President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, former Vice President Rex Lee Jim, and the Fort Defiance Twin Warrior Society at Diné College on Dec. 17, 2019.

The Office of the First and Second Lady works to strengthen Navajo families, which involve the creation of an internal workgroup known as the “Diné Nihik’éeí Nihí’ Násdtłjį’ Work Group, Reunite our Diné Relatives,” led by First Lady Nez and Second Lady Lizer. The group works to address issues and concerns related to social ills impacting Navajo families and missing and murdered Diné relatives. Most importantly, the workgroup focuses on healing, restoring, and reuniting Navajo families.

“There is no instruction manual when we become parents that teach us how to raise, protect, and guide our family. Many of us depend upon our parents and grandparent’s teachings, but some do not have those precious resources to learn from, and as neighbors and community members, we must help each other to raise our families. Together, we can strengthen our families through

prayer, daily exercise, building daily relationships with one another, and modeling servant-hood," said Second Lady Lizer.

The conference included presentations titled, "Traditions, Progress, and Growth," "Honoring our First Relationship: From the womb to warriors," "Having and Accepting Faith and Hope," "Family Financial Literacy," "Personal and Family Goal Setting," and "Recovery from Addiction is Doable."

The presenters included Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, former Vice President Rex Lee Jim, Navajo Nation Division of Community Development Executive Director Dr. Pearl Yellowman, Navajo Nation Division of Human Resources Executive Director Dr. Pherphelia Fowler, Dr. Henry Fowler of Navajo Technical University, Leupp Elementary School Principal Ryan Chee, Navajo Nation Judicial Branch Hearing Officer Victor Clyde, and Navajo Nation Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services Traditional Practitioner Gerald King.

Panel discussions also included participation from the Navajo Nation Youth Council and youth representing various Navajo communities, who reflected on the expectations of parents, grandparents, and relatives.

"I encourage our youth and young adults to learn and acknowledge our cultural identity, language, and family history. These teachings set a foundation based on resiliency, determination, and strength. The respect, discipline, and honor you learn from your parents, grandparents, and elders will allow you to create a healthy environment for your homes and communities," said President Nez.

Vice President added, "The theme of the conference reflected on the importance of family, faith, hope, love, and charity. These principles make us who we are, and they will carry our families and communities forward."

During the conference, the Fort Defiance Twin Warrior Society posted of colors, and Associated Students of Diné College President LeTanya Thinn provided the welcome address. On behalf of the Office of the First and Second Lady, we express our appreciation to Diné College for the collaboration to strengthen Navajo families across the Navajo Nation.

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