



## The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:  
Jared Touchin, Communications Director  
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer  
(928) 274-2758

[nnopvp.communications@gmail.com](mailto:nnopvp.communications@gmail.com)

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### President Nez joins Kayenta Service Unit to recognize the service of frontline warriors during the COVID-19 pandemic



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish with Kayenta Service Unit health care workers in Kayenta, Ariz. on June 2, 2021.

**KAYENTA, Ariz.** — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Navajo Area Indian Health Service Deputy Director Capt. Brian Johnson, and Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish joined officials at the Kayenta Health Center on Wednesday, to show their appreciation and to offer encouraging words for all of the Kayenta Indian Health Service Unit health care workers, administrative staff, and many others who put themselves at risk to help patients and save lives during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“We are not out of this pandemic yet, but we are here to recognize the sacrifices and courage of all of you here today. Over one year ago, this invisible monster known as COVID-19 entered our

communities and there was a lot of uncertainties at that time, but you did not back down. You were on the frontlines helping our people. When we didn't have enough PPEs, you all took time to make your own PPEs and you did what you had to do to help reduce the spread of the virus. You saved countless lives and because of your hard work and the teachings of our elders, we are beginning to emerge from the pandemic," said President Nez.

He also spoke about the importance of the teachings of our elders during the pandemic and the public health emergency orders recommended by the public health professionals including the Navajo Department of Health, Navajo Area IHS, and many others. On Tuesday, the Navajo Nation once again reported zero new cases of COVID-19 and no deaths.

The Navajo Nation's first confirmed case of COVID-19 was detected from a test sample collected within the Kayenta Service Unit in March 2020. Several communities within the Kayenta region were impacted very hard by the coronavirus. Overall, the Navajo Nation has reported 1,322 lives lost due to COVID-19 as of Tuesday.

Since the start of the pandemic, President Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish visited the Navajo Nation's 110 chapters to distribute essential items such as food, water, personal protective equipment, and fire wood to Navajo families. They also visited health care centers to offer support and assistance for health care workers and to encourage Navajo Nation residents to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Kayenta Health Center CEO Mariva Plummer and their executive team presented certificates of appreciation to all of the health center employees, President Nez, and Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish for their support throughout the pandemic. Incident Commander Dr. Diana De Leon also offered special recognition to the various organizations who helped the Navajo Nation since the start of the pandemic including the Team Rubicon disaster response members who came from different parts of the country to offer assistance.

Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish, who is from the community of Kayenta, recalled her experiences during the pandemic and thanked all of the frontline health care workers.

"This is where I am from. You all have watched me grow up. The lessons, stories, and teachings you draw strength from are the same traditions that carry me. When COVID-19 began on the Navajo Nation it began here — our home. It wasn't easy for anyone and I took it personally. I then rose up, just like all of you and took it upon myself to serve our people. You all, inspire me to be the best public servant I can be. I am inspired by you all and I am honored to share my gratitude with you all today," said Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish.

The Nez-Lizer Administration thanks the Kayenta Service Unit employees for hosting Wednesday's event and encourages all Navajo Nation residents to continue taking precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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