



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2015

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253

Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Delegate Brown continues to advocate for suicide awareness through the Building Communities of Hope tour



Photo: Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown addresses the audience at Monument Valley High School Auditorium during the “Building Communities of Hope” event on Dec. 16, 2015.

KAYENTA, Ariz. – On Wednesday evening, Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) took part in the “Building Communities of Hope” event held at Monument Valley High School. The tour was developed in response to the increasing number of suicides that have occurred on the Navajo Nation.

Delegate Brown commended all entities involved for organizing the “Building Communities of Hope” initiative to aid in suicide awareness and said he is pleased with the outpouring of support throughout Navajo communities and various programs.

“We have a lot of wonderful people who helped with the planning process, such as [Navajo Nation Division of Health director] Ramona Antone-Nez. She has assisted us since the beginning,” said Delegate Brown. “The first responders, police, EMT’s, school counselors, and clinics have been here to provide services to those in need. We have these resources and they are for anyone needing help.”

Delegate Brown, who represents the community of Kayenta, has advocated for suicide awareness since a string of suicides occurred earlier this year. He added that he hoped that Navajo government, programs, and communities continue to collaborate to help decrease the recent epidemic of suicides on the Nation.

In accordance with an executive order issued in November by President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez, the “Building Communities of Hope” initiative was created to establish a suicide prevention, response, and post-vention program.

Vice President Nez was also in attendance at the event, and said he was saddened to hear of a recent murder-suicide that occurred in Kayenta and offered words of encouragement.

“It is going to be tough for many of us today to present, especially after what has occurred here. I am here to comfort and be with you. We will get through this tough time as a community, because Navajo people are resilient. Many of us have experienced some tough times and we can get through it as a Navajo Nation,” said Vice President Nez.

Pax Harvey, a motivational speaker at the event, recently lost his brother to suicide and provided his personal experience to provide a message of hope.

“Don’t be ashamed to ask for help. Professionals are going through this, medicine people are going through this, and even preachers,” said Harvey. “This is the step towards bringing people together. I am doing this because I need healing. This is healing for me coming here. I want to thank each and every one of you for coming here, and I hope you walk away from here feeling better about yourselves.”

The tour began at Thoreau High School on Monday, and will conclude on Saturday, Dec. 19 at 5:30 p.m. in Chinle, Arizona at the Wildcat Den. For more information regarding the tour, please contact Yvonne Kee-Billison or Christopher Bahe at (928) 871-7000.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council