



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2015

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### **Delegate Crotty helps Navajo students attend the 2015 White House Tribal Youth Gathering**

**WASHINGTON D.C.** – On July 9, Navajo youth had the opportunity to attend the first ever White House Tribal Youth Gathering, an initiative that President Obama created to increase attention to Native American youth issues, which is also known as the Generation Indigenous or Gen-I.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'í'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz't'í'í) advocated for funding on behalf of several Navajo students from Arizona and New Mexico to attend the historic gathering held at the White House.

“I believe that sending Navajo youth to the White House Tribal Youth Gathering gives them the opportunity to meet other Native youth their age who are bringing awareness to their communities of issues important to them, such as youth programs, funding, higher education, and community activities,” said Delegate Crotty. “This is for them and we as tribal leaders need to support that.”

Delegate Crotty received information regarding the students that were registered to attend the gathering, however they were not able to obtain additional funding for travel and lodging.

Through the Casey Family Programs, eight total students attended the White House Tribal Youth Gathering, which included Triston Black, Zunneh-bah Martin, Shundeen Martin, Cassandra Monroe, Katelyn Long, Lonnie Williams, Lorenzo Lee, and Sheavon Yazzie.

The Casey Family Programs offers ongoing strategic consultation, technical assistance, data analysis, and independent research and evaluation at no cost to child welfare systems, policymakers, courts, and tribes across America. The programs seek to decrease the need of foster care and build “Communities of Hope” to create long-lasting improvements to the safety and success of children and families.

Dilkon Youth Services program and projects specialist Claudia Jackson, accompanied several of the students, while others attended with adult chaperones or their parents. She said that funding for Navajo youth to attend national events is very limited, and thanked Delegate Crotty for her persistent advocacy of Native youth.

“It takes the support of our current leaders to build up our young leaders and Delegate Crotty's support has been significant in bringing youth from different regions of the Navajo Nation together, where the focus was on their social, physical, spiritual, and mental development,” said Jackson. “And if it weren't for the partnership with the Casey Family Programs, we would not have had this opportunity for our Navajo youth.”

The gathering was organized through a partnership between the United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. (UNITY), The White House, National Congress of American Indians, Today's Native Leaders, Department of Health & Human Services, and the Department of Justice.

General sessions featured youth, including UNITY former Co-President Jared Massey and other UNITY youth, interviewing several Cabinet members including U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell, and Attorney General Loretta Lynch.

Addressing the Native youth was first lady Michelle Obama, who emphasized that Gen-I is not a program or a summit, rather it was important to view it as a movement of indigenous young people.

“Gen-I is about all of you investing in your promise by getting a good education. You've got to finish high school, go on to college or a vocational training program so that you are in a position to get good jobs and be the leaders that you were meant to be. And Gen-I is about tribal youth coming together and raising your voices for change not just in your Nations, but in the entire United States of America,” said the first lady.

In addition to attending the gathering, the Navajo students were given an educational tour, which included a visit to the National Museum of the American Indian and national historical and memorial sites within Washington, D.C.

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