



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253  
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174  
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

### **Health, Education, and Human Services Committee receives report regarding Project K'é**

**THOREAU, N.M.** – The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee last Wednesday received a report from the Thoreau Community Center regarding Project K'é, a youth and suicide awareness program. The community of Thoreau is located approximately 32-miles east of Gallup.

According to TCC director Priscilla Manuelito, from 2009 to 2010 the community of Thoreau reported 15 suicides, the majority of which were youth under 18 years of age. In response, the TCC implemented Project K'é to focus on at-risk youth, promote awareness, engage in suicide prevention efforts, and provide activities to youth as a positive outlet.

“Since the last cluster of suicides in 2010, there have been only two reported suicides since then, and we have helped prevent seven suicides through our Community Center,” said Manuelito.

She added that the program is a non-profit and is currently operating through grant funding. The program has expended the majority of its grant funding which is set to expire on July 31.

Advocating on behalf of the program, Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) said Project K'é previously received grant funding from McKinley County the last few years, however the county did not award the program for the current year.

“It frustrates me that the county receives so much funding through their alcohol tax and refuses to provide further funding to this program,” said Delegate Yazzie, who represents the community of Thoreau.

Delegate Yazzie said the program will seek support from the Navajo Nation Department of Behavioral Health Services by applying for a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. He said it is important that Project K'é receive funds from this grant to keep the program in operation and to promote its suicide surveillance program.

HEHSC member 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) urged committee members to consider obtaining funding from the Nation's Undesignated, Unreserved Fund Balance in the amount of \$250,000 to keep the program operating beyond July.

“We can look at getting UUFB money for this program to hold it over for the next year, just in case the grant money is not awarded, and it would give the program time to obtain additional funding,” said Delegate Crotty. “I don’t want to see this program disappear. This is us fighting for our youth.”

Delegate Yazzie said he would advocate for funding on behalf of Project K’*é* for operations, and work with the Navajo Nation Department of Health to include the youth program in its upcoming SAMHSA grant application.

HEHSC members voted 3-0 to accept the report.

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