



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 2015

MEDIA CONTACTS

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

Morning Star Leadership Youth Council receives visit from Speaker Bates



PHOTO: Speaker LoRenzo Bates speaks to the Morning Star Leaders Youth Council on Sept. 19, 2015.

PHOENIX, Ariz. – Approximately 22-members of the Morning Star Leaders Youth Council received a visit on Saturday, from Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) who presented and answered questions from the youth members regarding the Navajo Nation governmental structure and ongoing issues concerning youth and the Navajo Nation.

“I was very impressed with the interest and the challenging questions presented by the youth members,” stated Speaker Bates. “I fully understand there remains a greater need to bridge the gap between youth and Navajo leaders at the central level of government.”

According to the Morning Star Leadership Foundation’s website, the program’s activities include recruiting underrepresented Native youth while reconnecting youth who are away from their tribal homelands and bridges young people to local urban tribes, educational communities, learning institutions, and non-profits with a goal to develop strong allies and leaders to serve all of Indian Country.

The group is comprised of youth that reside in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area representing the San Carlos Apache, White River Apache, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, the Ak-Chin

Indian Community, Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Fort McDowell Yavapai Indian Community, and other tribes.

The majority of the students in attendance said they attend schools in the Phoenix area with many having extended families who reside on the Navajo Nation and many expressed their willingness to learn more about Navajo communities and the Nation's government.

Speaker Bates told the group that he along with his Council colleagues acknowledge the need for input from Navajo youth concerning issues impacting their communities, pointing out that his visit was intended to begin the process of having the youth more involved in their government.

Youth members and their parents asked several questions concerning intergovernmental issues, needs of Native American youth living in urban areas, Navajo language preservation, and others.

The group invited Speaker Bates to visit and to address the youth council as part of their ongoing effort to meet with and interact with tribal leaders. The youth members said they were very grateful to have a tribal leader such as Speaker Bates, take time to answer their questions and to interact with the students.

Executive director of the Morning Star Leaders Foundation Debbie Nez-Manuel, said the youth council holds general meetings every third Saturday of each month and maintains a consistent presence from volunteers as well, which includes three youth advisors and several board members, serving over 40 Native youth throughout the year on a continual basis.

"Our philosophy is about engaging all ages of Native youth and children, our young people must know in their minds and trust we are here to support and provide guidance at any given time, every day of the year. In turn, we cultivate confidence and trust in their decision making process," stated Nez-Manuel, who is originally from the community of Klagetoh.

To learn more about the Morning Star Leaders Youth Council, you may visit their website at: <http://morningstarleaders.org/>.

#

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