

Diné Youth & Justice

The Official Newsletter of the Navajo Nation
Judicial Branch's Nábináhaazláago Initiative

DECEMBER 2011
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4



Children's Code amendments passed by Council

The Navajo Nation Álchíní Bi Bee-haz'áanii Act of 2011 was passed by the Navajo Nation Council during its fall session on October 19, 2011, with a vote of 19 in favor and none opposed. President Ben Shelly signed the act into law on October 31, 2011.

The following are sections of the law that relate to the services that Nábináhaazláago Initiative offers in the field of case management and as a diversion program:

Title 9. Domestic Relations.

Chapter 11. Navajo Nation Children's Code

Subchapter 1. General Provisions.

9 N.N.C. § 1001 Purpose

(B) To protect children by taking actions and offering programs as may be proper and necessary to prevent delinquency, incorrigi-

bility, truancy, neglect and abuse.

(E) To seek out culturally appropriate methods for prevention, intervention and treatment of family disharmony.

9 N.N.C. § 1003 Courts; Generally.

(A) The Court is authorized to cooperate fully with any federal, state, Navajo Nation, public or private agency to participate in any diversion, rehabilitation, training, peacemaking programs and to receive grants in aid to carry out the purposes of this Chapter.

Subchapter 4. Delinquency Proceedings.

9 N.N.C. § 1304 (A) Allegations that a child is a delinquent child shall be referred to the Prosecutor, who shall conduct a preliminary inquiry. Upon completion of the inquiry, the Prosecutor shall: 1. File a peti-

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Case management workers receive training at annual Judicial Branch conference



Nov. 3—Case management officer Chanelle Benally learns about self-defense techniques during the 2011 Annual Judicial Conference.

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Nábináhaazláago Initiative program offices will be closed as of DEC. 29, 2011.

Thank you to all who assisted the initiative.

The Navajo Nation Judicial Branch had its annual conference at Gila River Indian Community on November 2-4. The theme for this year's conference was "Raising the Bar... A Journey to Excellence."

Case management workers and Nábináhaazláago Initiative staff received training in several areas during the break-out sessions of the conference.

Chanelle Benally said the sessions that were most valuable to her were Search & Restraint and Defensive Tactics. "I learned how to properly defend myself if an inmate or someone from the public were to ever attack me," she said.

Chanelle also attended sessions on the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety Criminal/Traffic

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About us

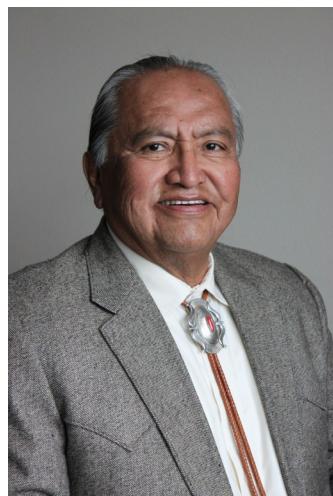
Judicial Branch Vision

It is our vision that the present judicial system, consisting of an adversarial-style tribal court system modeled on Anglo courts, a peacemaking system modeled on Diné original dispute resolution methods, and Probation and Parole Services, will fully embody the values and processes of the Navajo People, including family and clan-centered Navajo values. Our justice system as a whole will truly reflect the heart and soul of the Dine. It will be one that the People recognize as their own and fully participate in the spirit of nábináházlaago.

Judicial Branch Mission

The Judicial Branch will provide stability in the Navajo Nation government by providing court, peacemaking, and probation and parole services, to adjudicate cases, resolve disputes, rehabilitate individuals and families, restore harmony, educate the public, agencies, services and other governments in Diné bi beenahaz'áanii and protect persons and property pursuant to Navajo Nation laws, customs, traditions and applicable federal laws.

Pursuant to Diné bi beenahaz'áanii, the Judicial Branch will carefully develop a justice system that fully embodies the traditional values and processes of the Navajo people.



Herb Yazzie

Chief Justice

**JUDICIAL BRANCH OF
THE NAVAJO NATION**

NÁBINÁHAAZLÁAGO INITIATIVE

Vision Statement

To guide a new generation of youth with the knowledge, experience, positive values and well-being to succeed

Mission

To provide youth-driven services that change attitudes and behaviors, promote community collaboration, and ensure timely services, strengthening youth and families with cultural values and promoting wellness.

About the Initiative

The Judicial Branch obtained a two-year grant for \$1,362,906 through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Assistance to Rural Law Enforcement to Combat Crime and Drugs Program in 2009. With that grant, the Nábináházlaago Initiative – Services to Youth in Detention Centers was established in November 2009. The purpose of the Nábináházlaago Initiative is to provide case management services for youth in detention and ensure the released youth are provided with post-detention re-entry care.

The goals include ensuring assessments services and treatment are provided for youth in detention; establishing a steering commission to guide the work of the Initiative; formulating agreements and detailed plans for inter-agency collaboration; devising and implementing a data collection plan; and reducing recidivism rates.

The grant enabled the Judicial Branch to hire an operations analyst, a liaison officer, two case management supervisors, four case management officers and three office technicians to fulfill the goals of the Nábináházlaago Initiative. Staff members are stationed at the Administrative Office of the Courts in Window Rock and at project sites at the Tohatchi Youth Correction Center and the Tuba City Juvenile Detention Center. The case management officers provide intake, conduct interviews, develop case plans, facilitate case staffing and provide aftercare services for those youth and their families that choose to utilize the service.

Support for case management

"There is a great need for this program, the Navajo Nation Tuba City Case Management Services to help our youth develop their full potential. Many of our local youths need this type of assistance to find resources that help them address behaviors that cause them to engage in criminal behaviors."

Phil R. Begay, Treatment Coordinator at Navajo Treatment

"The school believes the Juvenile Case Management Office provides a service that has a direct impact on student learning and engagement."

Irene Donald Dejolie, School Counselor/Dean of Students at Tuba City Boarding School

"Many youth need this type of assistance to help them find the resources to address the challenges they face and to stay out of detention. They are given an opportunity that would otherwise not be available to them without this program."

Apache County Attorney Michael B. Whiting

"The Case Management Program staff are extremely dedicated to serving the youth not only in the Tohatchi area, but reservation wide."

Sister Pat Bietsch, Youth Minister for St. Mary Mission

"The early identification and intervention work provided by Dorothy Littleben, Robbin Preston and Randall Tsinnie represents excellent Judicial youth diversion work at its best, effectively reaching our struggling youth... Before the Case Management Office started there were huge gaps in Tuba City youth intervention and prevention service delivery."

Harriett Sloan-Carter, Principal at Tuba City Junior High School

"The case management office in Tohatchi is very crucial in our remote community. We have been helped by the staff with counseling and to get help with local teens that get in trouble."

A Parent

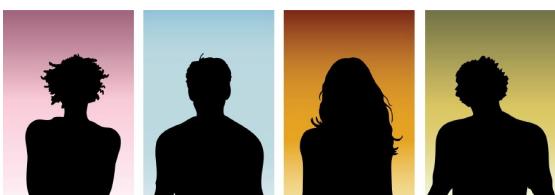
"...I know without Case Management Program, my grandson would still be doing the same thing, drinking... There are many programs out there, but this is one program that is needed for our children and I would sure hate to see the doors close."

A Grandfather whose grandson was helped by a case management officer



"This program is one of the most effective community-based youth intervention program in decades An example is, the Tuba City Case Management Office has successfully placed adolescents in residential facilities, while other local service agencies have taken over five weeks and even longer, to place a student in residential treatment facilities."

Dennis J. Bowen, Sr., Student Behavior Specialist at Tuba City Junior High School



"In working and collaborating with Mr. Robbin Preston, Mr. Randall Tsinnie, they are an asset to the Youth of our Community. They provide services to the juveniles in detention centers to pursue their education, receive treatment for substance abuse, emotional and social issues."

Eva A. Sam, Tuba City Probation/Parole Officer

News

Tuba City case management office at To'Nanees'Dizi Diné Fair



TUBA CITY—Tuba City Case Management Office Supervisor Dorothy Littleben and Office Technician Martha Dugi manned the Nábináhaazláago Initiative information booth at the 43rd Annual To'Nanees'Dizi Diné Fair on Kids Day, October 13, 2011.

More than 2,000 people were in attendance. Flyers, pamphlets, programs news letters and pencils were distributed to children from the area schools, teachers and parents by case management staff. Ms. Littleben and Ms. Dugi provided information to the community about the program and how they can help youth within the service area and throughout the Navajo Nation. ■



Children's Code amendments passed

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tion pursuant to § 1304, herien, or 2. Refer the matter within ten (10) calendar days from the day of declination to another appropriate agency.

9 N.N.C. § 1307 Preliminary Diversion. In lieu of filing a petition, the Prosecutor, the probation officer, the child and the parent(s), guardian(s) or custodian(s) may participate in a diversion program; such program shall be monitored by Probation Services.

9 N.N.C. § 1307 (B) A child's participation in any diversion shall: 1. Be voluntary and binding. 2. Require the consent of the parent(s), guardian(s) or custodian(s). 3. Be dismissed upon successful completion with no petition being filed and shall not be used against the child in any further proceedings.

9 N.N.C. § 1307 (C) A child deemed to have committed a violent or serious act or is a chronic offender shall not be eligible for the diversion program.

9 N.N.C. § 1307 (D) In the event of any violation of the diversion program, the probation officer shall refer the matter to the Prosecutor and a petition may be filed with the Court.

9 N.N.C. § 1314 (A) The Court shall order probation services to prepare a predisposition study including evaluations, assessments, and dispositional reports, which shall be submitted to all parties five (5) working days prior to the hearing. Such report shall include information of the child, his/her family, home environment and academic needs. A party failing to timely file such documents, in absence of just cause, may be sanctioned at the Court's discretion.

The amendments give new responsibilities to the Probation and Parole Services program under the Judicial Branch. These services are currently being performed by the Nábináhaazláago Initiative case management staff at the youth detention centers of the Navajo Nation. ■

Success stories

A Thankful Experience

By Chanelle Benally, Case Management Officer

I have been working on a case that involves a 15 year old girl who has been through Tohatchi Youth Corrections four times and has been into Tohatchi Case Management Office three times.

The last time the young lady was in our office she had asked for case management services. She wanted to be placed into a treatment facility. She had signed the consent forms and I met with the mother who also wanted her daughter to get treated. This young lady has a history of suicidal ideations and self-harming behavior. During her court hearing, she had an outburst in front of the judge, prosecutor and the correction officer. She had begun to scratch her forearm with her nails and threatened to commit suicide. The Correction Officer transported her to Gallup Indian Medical Center, where she was psychologically assessed and evaluated. She was then sent to a treatment center in Las Cruces, N.M. She was released from there and then brought back to Tohatchi Youth for the weekend. The young lady was then sent to Presbyterian Medical Services San Juan County Adolescent Residential Treatment Center. She had an episode at San Juan where she had to be evaluated and assessed for suicidal intentions. With the outcome from the evaluation she was sent to Kaseman Presbyterian Hospital in Albuquerque, N.M. It was recommended by the psychiatrist in Farmington, N.M., that the young lady needed to be placed into a secure lockdown residential treatment facility.

I diligently worked with Tohajilee/Crownpoint Prosecutor and Crownpoint District Court to have court orders signed by the judge to have the young lady placed into a secure residential treatment facility, so she may get the treatment she needs. On November 23, 2011, the final court order was signed and sent to me. I also received a phone call that the juvenile was accepted into Desert Hills Residential Treatment Facility. The young lady is now with Desert Hills and receiving the treatment she needs.

With working with the courts and prosecutors, two court orders, four assessments/evaluations, numerous phone calls, fax after fax, and three hospitals later, I had gotten the juvenile into a secure treatment facility. I had times where this was the only case I could think of. I had been working on this case since October 17, 2011.

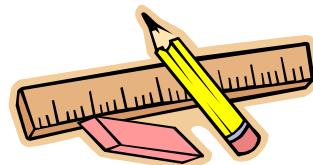
I had a lot to be thankful this Thanksgiving. I am thankful that the prosecutor and the courts stuck with me and helped place the juvenile into the treatment center. It's cases like these that I can look back on and see that this is what being a Case Management Officer means: it means going above and beyond, doing all you can no matter what, never giving up on the juvenile, and using every resource you can imagine to get the solution you need. ■

Updates from Tuba City Case Management Office

By Randall Tsinnie, Case Management Officer

For the month of September and October, there has been eight juveniles that have been referred for treatment who are now waiting for a spot to open for inpatient or outpatient treatment. The eight that were referred are high risk and have truancy issues, problems with substance abuse and issues with custody disputes. The outcomes of the treatment process are pending.

The majority of the cases are referrals made from the local school at risk counselors. In these cases all other options have been depleted through school meetings with parents and counselors before being sent to residential treatments set up by Behavioral Health. Juvenile case managers gather all the required supporting documents such as mental health evaluations, physical exams, background information, school progress reports and disciplinary actions. The case managers do the leg work in setting up appointments and while evaluation is being completed, they also seek a treatment facility where the youth will fit based on the mental health evaluation. The entire process begins with a signed parents and child consent form or by a court order. ■



By Robbin Preston, Case Management Officer

In the last newsletter, I explained how I helped a client get into a treatment center in Scottsdale, Arizona. Recently I received a report card from the treatment facility where he receives counseling and is continuing his education in its accredited school program. He is currently receiving all As and Bs in courses such as Geography, Health, Geometry, History and English.

The report also stated that he is very well-behaved and is actively participating in his program. I am hopeful that this change in behavior will continue when he returns home. ■

Partnerships

Youth “jump for hope” at conference

Nábináhaazláago Initiative Operations Analyst Perry Yazzie presented to youth during the first-ever Youth Conference put together by the F.O.R.T. A-Team resource group of collaborators.

The Youth of the Nation conference had a theme of “Yell for Change, Jump for Hope,” and was held at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock on Nov. 3-4.

About 85 students from eight local schools took part in the conference. Each day started with a general assembly and students then went in to four 40 minute break-out sessions.

There were sessions on STDs/Teen Pregnancy, Domestic Violence/Teen Relationships, Life Skills/Life Choices, and Spiritual Cultural Connection on the first day.

Yvonne Kee-Billison of the Fort Defiance Office of Diné Youth provided the welcome address, conference overview and purpose the first day. Attorney Justin Jones spoke on “Historical Trauma and the Impact on Diné” during the general assembly.

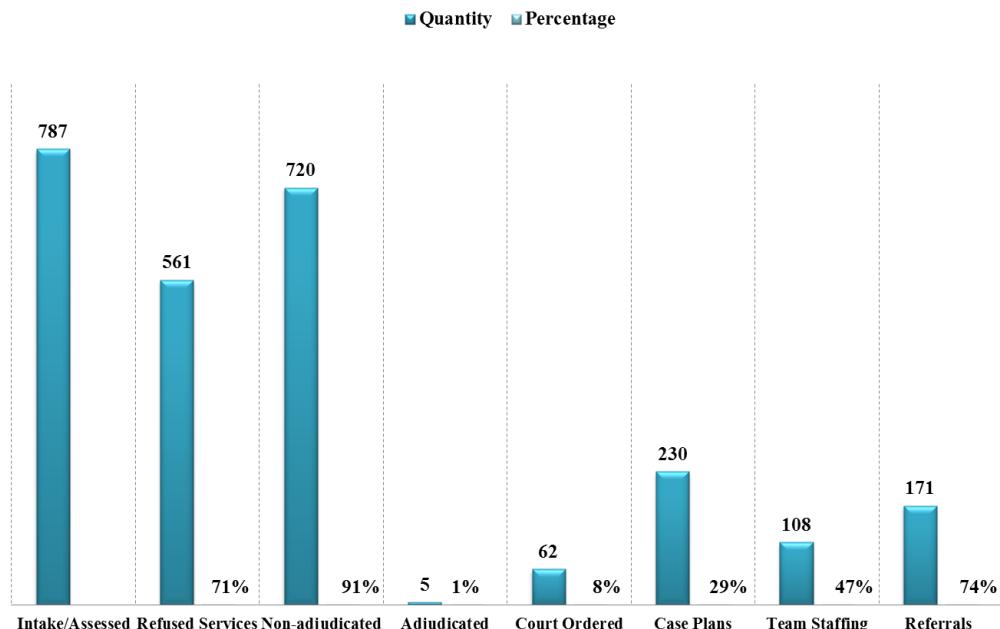
The sessions on Nov. 4 included Native Pride and Impact, Mental Health-Suicide Prevention, Animal Care, and Bullying. A welcome address was provided by Miss Navajo Crystalene Curley and students from Tse Hootsooi Dine Bi Olta bi Tsilkei conducted the closing prayer that day.

Kee-Billison said the first youth conference was a success. Students even wanted more time in the break-out sessions, she said.

The Office of Youth Development is putting together the results from the evaluations that participants filled out. The information will be useful since the F.O.R.T. A-Team wants to put together another conference possibly in the summer.

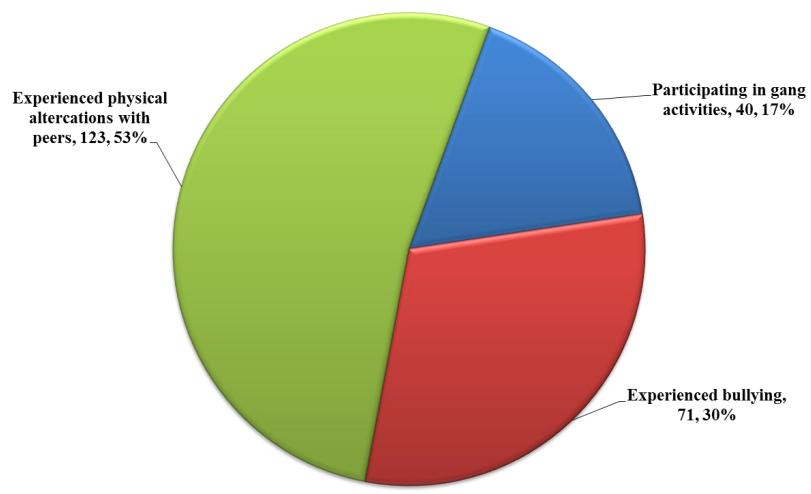
Collaborators included the Office of Youth Development/Boys and Girls Club of Diné Nation, Tse-hootsooi Medical Center, Navajo Housing Authority, Navajo Nation Veterinarian Program, First Things First, Special Diabetes Project and Navajo Nation Police. Other programs and schools also helped out to make the conference a success. ■

**FY 2010-11 Nabinahaazlaago Juvenile Services
Y-T-D Program Services & Status**



The Nábináhaazláago Initiative shared data that has been gathered from the program through graphs such as these. More statistics from the program were also shared with conference participants.

**FY 2010-11 Nábináhaazláago Juvenile Services
Juvenile Profile - Gang Activity, Bullying, Altercations**



Judicial Branch conference (cont'd. from p. 1)

Record Process & Arizona Department of Public Safety on the National Crime and Information Center, Introduction to Justware, and Indigency Form & Case Management.

Martha Dugi said this was her first conference while working for the Judicial Branch and she enjoyed the sessions. "I appreciate the Judicial Branch's willingness to pay for education like this to help motivate its employees especially for me, because I have never worked in a judicial setting before," she said.

Martha attended sessions on Retirement, Employee Benefits and Introduction to Justware. Her favorite presentation was by Apache County Justice of the Peace Victor J. Clyde. "His examples were humorous and the presentation was very refreshing. With teachers like him, there is hope our culture will endure the many changes that come with time," she said.

Dorothy Littleben, case management supervisor, also found Justice Clyde's presentation valuable. It reminded her that knowing Navajo culture, language and k'é are the foundation to a well-balanced life.

Karen Francis, judicial liaison officer, attended sessions on Contracts and Grants Dos and Don'ts, Adobe Acrobat, Diné Traditional Games, Introduction to Justware and Traditional Concepts to Navajo Justice.

"The session by the peacemakers on Traditional Concepts to Navajo Justice was extremely helpful to understand where our Fundamental Laws come from. It's important for Navajo people and Judicial Branch employees to have this knowledge," Francis said. ■



Nov. 2—Tohatchi Office Technician Tamera Tsosie (right) learns about Defensive Tactics with Sgt. Emmett Yazzie and Lori Kisto.



Nov. 3—Tuba City Office Technician Martha Dugi (left) at the Diné Traditional Games session conducted by Gloria Benally.



Nov. 2—Supreme Court Associate Justice Eleanor Shirley welcomes Judicial Branch staff at the General Assembly.



Nov. 2—Nábináhaazláago Initiative staff listen in during a break-out session at the annual Judicial Branch conference.

Judicial Branch of the Navajo Nation

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