

PEACEMAKING PROGRAM



Statement on Hope and Rejuvenation

We are the image of our ancestors created in connection with all creation. Since time immemorial, our people have faced numerous trials and tribulations and we endure as Diné. There are many times when our resolve was tested and our ability to rebuild ourselves and rise above our dilemmas was demonstrated. We have proven resilient time and again.

When faced with a problem, anáhóót'i'go, we are able to think about our predicament and then plan a way to address it, Nitsáhákees dóó Nahat'á. We're also able to put these plans into action and then find a place of wisdom and reflection, and with confidence in knowing that we have accomplished something important, "liná dóó sihasin. And then the process starts all over again when new situations and new challenges arise. In our Diné origin and clans migration stories, we have travelled through many obstacles and challenges. With the guidance of the Holy People and our capacity to look ahead, we have come to this point in our history where we have again been confronted with another form of Naayéé', a force of nature that means to cause us great harm and destroy us. In our Diné Twin hero's narrative journey stories, Naayéé'neizghání and Tóbájishchíní, the warrior twins, are important examples of holy beings who guide and protect us still to this day. Along with their mother, Changing Woman, they hold a unique relationship with us, her children, we the Nihookáá' Diyin Dine'é Bíla'ashdla'ii, The five-fingered, earth surface holy people.

Many Diné believe there were signs that are foretold of the newest calamity that we face now. It was foreseen by our gifted Diné Hataa'ii to see and interpret various natural occurrences. There was talk of how the bright red twilight and red dawn started to occur often, was one such sign that was read as something foretelling misfortune. Some also said that the red ray of light that sometimes surrounds the sun also foretold the impending fate of COVID-19. Still others believe that the breakdown of our cultural values, ethics, and morals and loss of language and our way of life were also indicators of the coming of Nayéé'.

It's in our nature to be survivors and Naabaahii. Our cultural knowledge, practices, and ceremonies conditioned us to be resilient. We have never fully succumbed to any force that was intent on destroying us. We have always found a way to survive. We continue to conquer many "monsters" using our own, varying, spiritual beliefs. Many of us have done this with the continued respect and honoring of the traditional teachings from our ancestors and the Holy People. Even in this time of fear and uncertainty, we are continuing to face this new challenge head on. Our people are suffering. Many of our relatives and loved ones are no longer here because of this pandemic, and we have experienced deep trauma. We are tired and we've become impatient and complacent during these troubled times.

Yet, in spite of this, many of us still cling to the teachings of our ancestors and the Holy People. We trust in our Diné way of life, strong history and our own strength and will to overcome COVID-19. This is the way of our Ancestors and our Diné Fundamental Laws teachings. It is how we are created in their image, and how we are connected deeply, to all of creation.

We have crossed into 2021 and have learned much about this new Nayéé'. We've come to this point where the tide is soon to change. Thinking and planning have helped our leaders to assess our situation and discuss possible solutions. They have done the work and have learned new knowledge that builds their confidence and prepares them for new challenges to come. Our Nation will survive and we will gain new knowledge. We can have confidence to stand up and feel a sense of accomplishment and continuity. Our ancestors gave us these teachings with the hope that someday, we can remember them and apply them. This is what our elders pray for and to our future.
