

ANETH COMMUNITY COURT NEWSLETTER

ANETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF THE
NAVAJO NATION JUDICIAL BRANCH



Spring 2016

MOU Signed!

We are very excited to have just received final approval and completed signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Aneth Community Court Program of the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch, Aneth Judicial District and Utah Navajo Health System, Inc. Behavioral Health of Montezuma Creek, Utah. In the works since June 2015, the new MOU recognizes an understanding between the Aneth Community Court and UNHS Behavioral Health staff for behavioral services, periodic reports to the court by UNHS Behavioral Health, and when possible, participation in team treatment case review meetings. The participants in Aneth Community Court are adult individuals who have a criminal charge pending against them but who chose to address their behavior through treatment and other services to address the root causes of their behavior. By June 2015, 83 percent of Aneth Community Court participants had alcohol-related offenses. The MOU recognizes that culturally relevant treatment strategies are necessary to address substance abuse, which is a major cause of crime in our communities, and the partnership between the parties will begin to solve the problem of crime stemming from substance abuse.

Aneth Community Court Pilot Project grant nears its end

A three-year pilot project called Aneth Community Court, also known as the second chance court, has been successful; however, the grant funded by Bureau of Justice Assistance ends September 30, 2016. The program is designed to enhance the local court system to reduce crime, prevent substance abuse, and improve the community's trust in justice by offering alternative sanctions and swift interventions for participants using culturally appropriate wellness programs and community participation. The Aneth Community Court made justice more visible to the community and more meaningful for offenders who are brought to court. Aneth Community Court has reached out to the local community to build effective multi-disciplinary partnerships to address the needs of both the offenders and the community.

"Thank you Aneth Community Services for allowing me to go through your program to help me and working with me for my recovery. Your program worked for me."

-ACC Graduate from Red Mesa, Arizona-

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Creating Positive Identity

Aneth Community Court participants are held accountable through community service work. Normally, community service work is to be completed in the community where the offense occurred. After a person is ordered to service, the Resource Coordinator helps the participant find an appropriate place to work off their time.

It can become difficult for some participants if they have no transportation or employment, so the Community Court looks for alternatives. Centered on the participants' trust and honesty, Aneth Community Court can be flexible. Most participants have remarkable skills. For example, one participant is skilled in carpentry.

This participant holds a full time job and is the primary provider for his family, so we got creative. With the help of Aneth Court staff, we provided him lumber and he built a bench with flower beds for the Aneth District Court. The participant used his own tools and hardware. In the end, he fulfilled his court-ordered community service by using his talents and enhancing the Aneth District Court without any adverse effect on his em-



Bench with Flower Beds made by Aneth Community Court Participant. -March 2016

The Navajo Nation Council Law and Order Committee commends of Aneth Community Court

On April 27, 2016, the Law and Order Committee visited Aneth District Court as part of their ongoing initiative to visit all the judicial districts on the Navajo Nation and reach out to judicial and public safety officials across the Navajo Nation to receive a firsthand perspective on issues and conditions unique to the districts.

Aneth Judicial District Court Administrator Susie L. Martin gave a report on the Aneth Community Court Program, the Re-Entry Court Program of U.S. District Court in Utah held in collaboration with the Aneth Judicial District, Pro Se Clinics provided by Aneth Staff Attorney, case load statistics, community survey overview, future goals and challenges faced by our remote district.

Among the reports received by the Law and Order Committee, the Aneth Community Court was highlighted as a successful pilot project. Susie explained the Community Court serves as an alternative problem solving court, which collaborates with service providers to deter crime by rehabilitating individuals in the justice system. Susie explained how Aneth Community had no option to contend with crime, which led to exploring creative alternatives.

On the other hand, Susie explained that the grant funding is coming to an end which will mean the loss of the Resource Coordinator position. Council Delegate Raymond Smith Jr., Vice Chairman of the Law and Order Committee, strongly recommended the Judicial Branch courts adopt Community Court programs in all the districts because it restores justice and offenders help their local communities. The Aneth site visit report received media attention in the Gallup Independent and on KTNN Radio.





Aneth Community Court participants at work.



Hooghan Nímázi at Whitehorse High School

A Hooghan Nímázi (which means a round home or hogan) is a traditional dwelling of the Diné (Navajo) People. There are two basic styles, female and male. A female Hooghan Nímázi is roughly rounded construction with cedar logs, bark, and mud; it has one room with a wood burning stove in the middle, a smoke hole in the ceiling, and the door facing east. A Hooghan Nímázi is used as a dwelling; others are used for ceremonial purposes.

Aneth Community Court and the Peacemaking Program have been involved in the planning and re-building of the Hooghan Nímázi at Whitehorse High School in Montezuma Creek, Utah. The Aneth Community Court coordinated participants who needed to fulfill their court ordered community service work and the Peacemaking Program involved Navajo teens, along with the contractor from the school.

“The building of a Hooghan Nímázi involves the four cardinal directions of Nitsáhakéés (Thinking Process), Nahat’á (Planning Process), ‘liná (Life), and Siihasin (Hope). The Hooghan Nímázi is constructed according to the instructions given by the Diyin Dine’é (holy ones) and it takes the right people to build a Hooghan Nímázi. Nowadays, we do things differently, but at the end the intent is still there which gives us hope,” says Aneth Traditional Program Specialist Stanley Nez.

The Hooghan Nímázi at Whitehorse High School will be utilized by the Diné (Navajo) Culture class and for Peacemaking sessions to teach our children and grandchildren traditional stories and kinship.



Above Photo: Aneth Traditional Program Specialist Stanley Nez

“The staff is friendly and professional and I enjoyed working with them.”
-ACC Graduate from Red Mesa, Arizona-



Left to right: Aneth District Court Judge Irene S. Black, Aneth Community Court participant, Aneth Girl Scout Troop 2696, and Aneth Resource Coordinator.

*"The Farmington Police Department was pleased to participate in the latest resource meeting. By improving communication between community resource groups, we can better serve all our citizens and improve the quality of life for communities throughout the 4 Corners region."
Chief Steve Hebbe*

Partnership for the Future

Our recent Resource Meeting was held on June 29, 2016 at Red Mesa Chapter in Red Mesa, Arizona. We were joined by representatives from Aneth District Court Staff, Navajo Regional Behavioral Health and Utah Navajo Health System, Inc. Behavioral Health, Navajo Nation Department of Self Reliance, Active Re-Entry, Independent Living Coordinator and Veteran Service Coordinator, and Farmington, New Mexico Police Department. It has been a great quest to have our local, state, and non profit organization's come together to share information, ideas, and planning for a positive community. Our Resource Meeting is a good way for us to liaison with one another, build partnership and learn what each are doing so we can better advocate for participant who chose to change their ways in Aneth Community Court.



Stop, Collaborate, and Listen

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Aneth Community Court Adopt-A-Highway Trash Pick Up

Taking part in the Adopt-a-Highway on March 4, 2016 were an Aneth Community Court participant, Aneth Community Court staff, Aneth Girl Scout Troop 2696, and community members. They collected trash along a 2-mile stretch of Utah State Route 162, from milepost 24 to 26.

Having no transportation did not stop one of the Aneth Community Court participants from taking part in the trash pick up. The ACC participant hitchhiked from at least an hour away to get to Aneth. Not only did the participant fulfill his court-ordered community service work hours, but took pleasure in picking up trash along side of Aneth District

Aneth Girl Scout Troop 2696 did not wait for Earth Day to clean up their community. After learning about the Aneth Community Court Trash Pick-up project, they went right to work. Wearing gloves and carrying trash bags, our young citizens carried a lot of positive energy and reduced our expected time to finish. In addition, Aneth District Court Judge Black provided general information about the Court to Aneth Girl Scout Troop 2696 and their troop leaders.

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