

Diné Youth & Justice

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

MAY 2011
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2



Nábináhaazláago Initiative serving youth in detention

Nábináhaazláago Initiative case management staff members in Tuba City and Tohatchi have served more than 500 youth at the detention sites since case management services began in 2010. The Initiative provides youth in detention with case management services to refer them to resources they need to address the causes of why they end up in detention.

The Nábináhaazláago Initiative staff members are also working on data collection on statistics regarding youth in detention where none had previously been collected. This data will enable the Navajo Nation to find out why youth are in detention, what type of services are needed for them and what the systemic issues are within the juvenile justice system.

The case management program referred youth to Indian Health Service, Navajo Nation Department of Behavioral Health Services, Office of Youth Development, Schools, Division of Work Force Development and Division of Social Services during 2010.

STATISTICS

From 2005 to 2010, an average of 2,144 juveniles were arrested per year. Of those, 65 percent were released and 35 percent were detained. About 1/4 of those became a part of the district course caseload.

Of those provided services by the Nábináhaazláago Initiative, about 35 percent were 17 years old; 30 percent were 16 years old; and 19 percent were 15 years old.

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April 1—People who stopped by the Nábináhaazláago Initiative table at Window Rock Judicial District's Justice Day picked up a copy of the first edition of Diné Youth & Justice newsletter.

Navajo Nation Courts hold Justice Day activities

WINDOW ROCK—The Navajo Nation took control of its judicial system on April 1, 1959, and to celebrate the anniversary, the judicial districts held Justice Day at the courts across the Navajo Nation.

Navajo Nation Justice Day gives the public an opportunity to visit the courts to learn more about how our justice system works.

Justice Day was observed with various activities at the following locations and dates:

April 1—Aneth Judicial District; Crownpoint Judicial District; Dilkon Judicial District; Kayenta Judicial District; Ramah Judicial District; Shiprock Judicial Dis-

trict; Alamo Court; Window Rock Judicial District

April 8—Tuba City Judicial District; To'Hajiilee Court

April 15—Chinle Judicial District

At Window Rock, various programs, including Nábináhaazláago Initiative, set up informational booths outside the Division of Public Safety/Window Rock Courthouse, tours were given, cake was served and a fun run/walk was held.

Aneth Judicial District had an open house at the courthouse and a presentation on pro se forms or how to file a petition on your own

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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 Diné. It will be one that the People recognize as their own and fully participate in the spirit of nábináhaazlaago.

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.

Nábináhaazláago Initiative

Administrative Office
P.O. Box 520
Window Rock, AZ 86515
Telephone: (928) 871-6920
Fax: (928) 871-6761

Tohatchi Case Management Office
Tohatchi Youth Correction Center
P.O. Box 1599
Tohatchi, NM 87326
Telephone: (505) 733-2842/2843
Fax: (505) 733-2815

Tuba City Case Management Office
Western Navajo Juvenile Detention Center
Telephone: (928) 283-3152
Fax: (928) 283-8003

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 Nábináhaazláago Initiative – Services to Youth in Detention Centers was established in November 2009. The purpose of the Nábináhaazláago 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, case management officers and office technicians to fulfill the goals of the Nábináhaazláago 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.

F.O.R.T. A-Team collaborating for a positive community

FORT DEFIANCE – Collaborators within the Fort Defiance Agency have begun gathering in 2011 to build the F.O.R.T. A-Team. F.O.R.T. stands for “Friends Organizing Resources Together,” and that is exactly what the group members do as they meet each month.

Various programs attend the monthly meetings to collaborate and to become resources for each other. Participants include law enforcement, schools, Fort Defiance Indian Health Board, Judicial Branch programs, the Office of Youth Development and other Navajo Nation programs. Members of task forces such as the Breastfeeding Task-force, Beautiful Life with Hope Coalition, Multidisciplinary Obesity Task Force and Navajo Balance Committee also attend.

During the first meeting, the collaborators decided that the purpose of the group is, “A Partnership for a Better and Positive Community,” or “ABC.”

At each meeting, the group members share with each other upcoming events, trainings, and resources that are valuable. They also share stories and reach out to each other as local resources for projects that are happening in the community. The group made a decision that the community it is targeting is the Fort Defiance Agency. Members began creating a resource map of the agency at their first meeting in February.

Yvonne Kee-Billison, director of Office of Youth Development in Fort Defiance, said the group is



still looking to tap into more resources and to include other types of organizations at its meetings.

A resource group for the entire agency is a good idea to many of the participants and something

that is much needed, they said. Elaine Henderson, peacemaking liaison for Window Rock Judicial District, noted that people with different issues often come to the Peacemaking Program seeking help.

“Sometimes they come in and want to talk to someone right away,” she said. Henderson said it would help her to immediately know what and where the local resources are so she can refer them to those services.

Renee Tsinnie of the St.

March 9—Collaborators take part in an ice breaker at the F.O.R.T. A – Team meeting at the Office of Youth Development in Fort Defiance.

Michaels Indian School said the gathering of collaborators also helps her work. Normally, people don’t know what programs do, where they’re located or how they can help each other, she said.

“I’m realizing they want to work with us as a school. They want to do community work as well,” she said.

The collaborators are able to help each other when challenges arise, she added. “Someone sitting here may say,

“Hey, I can help that challenge,” she said.

For more information, contact Yvonne Kee-Billison at the OYD in Fort Defiance. ■

F.O.R.T. stands for “Friends Organizing Resources Together.” A-Team refers to the service area, which is Fort Defiance Agency.

The purpose of the resource group is: “A Partnership for a Better and Positive Community.”

Tuba City case management officers present to Boys and Girls Club



TUBA CITY—On March 15, case management officers from Tuba City provided a presentation to the Boys & Girls Club of Diné Nation in Tuba City. The club members were observing National Boys & Girls Club Week with week-long activities for the community and the youth.

The participants ranged in age from 8 to 21 and there were 13 youth in attendance, including visitors from the state of Virginia and some college students.

Robbin Preston and Randall Tsinnie worked together to provide program pamphlets, hand out newsletters and speak to the youth using visual aids from the detention facility.

The two case management officers

were able to show the youth the jumpsuit that detainees wear, including shackles, handcuffs, and a belly chain, from the juvenile facility.

None of the children or visitors were placed in any restraint but the visual presentation helped to convey the message that they do not want to end up in those restraints.

“This visual aid really opened the eyes of the youth and brought out of them more questions of how we help our clients, services we provide and how to keep out of being detained or getting into trouble,” Preston said.

During the 45-minute presentation, the case management officers also educated the youth on the program’s procedures and process. ■

Nábináhaazláago serving youth in detention

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According to data from Navajo Nation Public Safety 23 percent of offenses by all detainees involved public intoxication; 18 percent involved disorderly conduct; 4 percent were for DWI; and 13 percent involved curfew violations and loitering.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Initiative involves the participation of major Navajo Nation justice agencies and service providers, puts in place a central authority management structure and provides staffing to ensure collaboration and continued participation by partners. As part of the Initiative, the Initiative is seeking Memoranda of Understanding with various programs. As of the end of FY 2011 Second Quarter, the status of the MOUs are as follows:

- The Office of Youth Development (OYD) - Crownpoint Agency’s sub-agreement has been signed by OYD and is pending at the Judicial Branch for signature;
- The MOU draft is being resubmitted to the Office of the Chief Prosecutor;
- The MOU with Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Northern New Mexico has been signed by the organization and by Chief Justice Herb Yazzie;
- The MOU sub-agreement with OYD Fort Defiance Agency is at OYD for signature. ■

Resources and Referrals We Can Assist With

We work with a variety of service providers to get help with the issues detainees need to address. Some of the referrals we have made for clients include:

- ◆ Youth employment
- ◆ Career counseling
- ◆ Alcohol/substance abuse treatment
- ◆ Counseling
- ◆ Mentoring
- ◆ Domestic violence intervention
- ◆ Alternative high school
- ◆ G.E.D. classes
- ◆ Traditional advising

Nábináhaazláago Initiative now has webpages on the www.navajocourts.org website. Go to the main page and click on the link for the Initiative on the left-hand side of the home page. There will be updates and more information about our program and meeting dates available through our webpages.

Endless possibilities

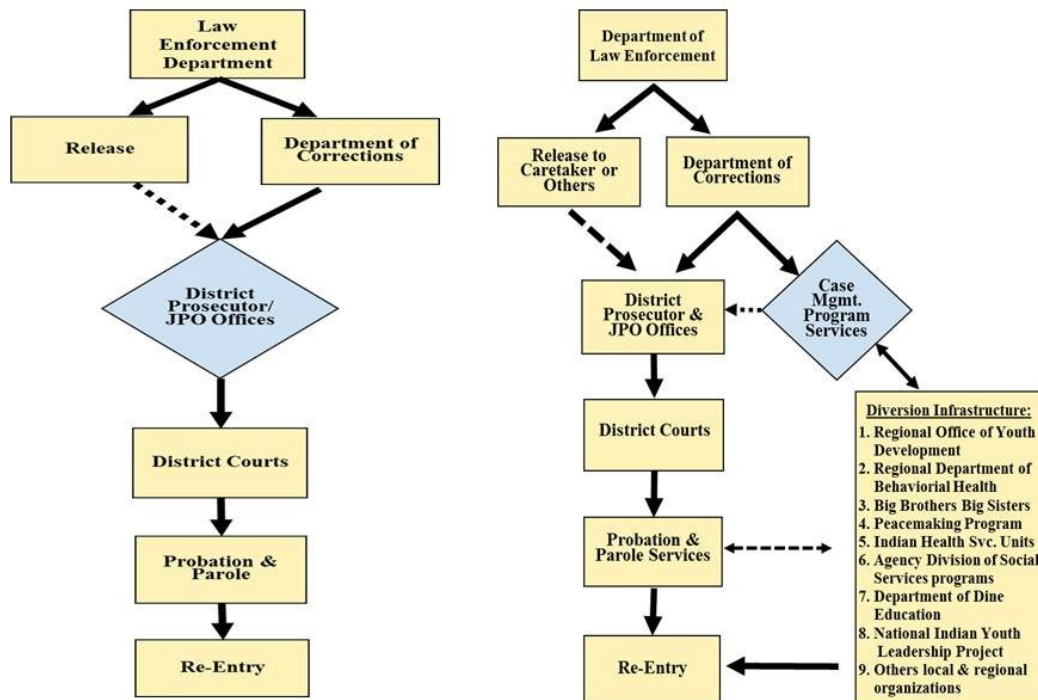
By Chanelle Benally, Case Management Officer



TOHATCHI—A young boy was referred to Tohatchi Case Management by Tohatchi Youth Corrections. This had been his first time being apprehended with the Navajo Nation Law Enforcement and being detained in a correctional facility. He sat down with case management staff and was given the case management assessment. He said that he wanted help with counseling services. We referred him to Gallup Indian Medical Center's Department of Behavioral Health. There he was able to get the counseling he needed. His father stops by or calls our office periodically to update us on his son's status. The last update we received his father mentioned that his son was going to counseling sessions, attending school, he is at a 3.2 GPA level and he is a peer mediator at the middle school in his community. The father also mentioned that his son's attitude has changed enormously and he likes to spend time with his family. This individual will be graduating this spring.

This little story is a reminder to parents that if you engage yourself into your child's life, they will open up to you and ask for the help they need. Love, commitment and encouragement will help you and your child form a strong relationship that cannot be broken by peer pressure or the temptations of alcohol or substances. When you are involved in your child's life there are endless possibilities to what your child can accomplish and how proud they will make you feel. We may not get the chance to change or help all of the youth we meet and talk with or their families, but with this individual it shows that there is a possibility to help change our future generations behavior so that they may lead our great nation in harmony and peace.

General Overview of the Navajo Nation Juvenile Justice System and Role of Nábináhaazláago Initiative Project



Spotlight on Shiprock Victim Impact Panel

By Perry H. Charley

SHIPROCK, N.M.—The Shiprock Agency, San Juan County, in New Mexico is a border community on the Navajo Nation comprised of 20 chapters (established Navajo government centers) within a land base of 2,726,437 acres and an estimated population of 29,529. The Navajo Nation median household income is very low at \$13,984. Employment opportunities are limited by low educational attainment and lack of economic development.

Due to these disadvantages, many seek relief through the misuse of intoxicants. This has led to an ever-increasing problem of driving under the influence of intoxicating substances. 71 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities within the Shiprock area are attributable to driving under the influence (NMDOT Report of Fatalities and Severe Injuries, 2010). 50 percent of all vehicle crashes with severe disabling injuries requiring hospitalization were alcohol related. The Navajo Nation and the Indian Health Service have listed motor vehicle crashes resulting in fatalities and injuries as one of the top three injury prevention concerns. Statistics continue to be alarming and mitigation is urgently needed.

The Shiprock Victim Impact Panel (VIP), a non-profit private Navajo intervention organization, is in a unique position to address these measures within the affected community/border-towns and work toward incorporating an awareness intervention program that is sensitive to Navajo cultural and traditional values. The coordinator serves as the only Native American (member on the San Juan County DWI Task Force, located in Farmington, N.M., and comprising of local police departments (Farmington, Aztec, Bloomfield, San Juan County Sheriff, New Mexico State Police) and alcohol intervention entities. It has been a member of the New Mexico Survivors of Homicide, Inc., since 1997. It is not a part of MADD, but works closely with the agency and many other alcohol/drug prevention programs.

Shiprock VIP began in 1997 and has since proven to be a viable program in working directly with the tribal courts, probation office and prosecutors office, proving to be an effective deterrent for convicted first time DWI offenders. Assessments of evaluation forms by DWI offenders indicate a positive decrease in continued intentions to drink and drive. The panel consists of families, friends or professionals (i.e. police officers, EMT's, firemen, emergency personnel) who have encountered or experienced an alcohol related accident and/or fatality, and who are willing to talk about their experience. The family members and friends (victims) may have lost a child or close relative, or become per-

manently disabled as a result of one of these alcohol related accidents. The panel members tell their stories to assemblies of court ordered DWI

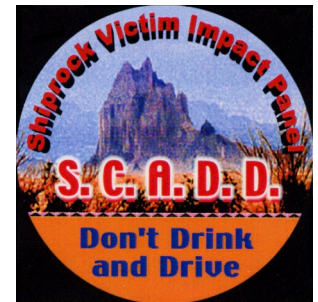
offenders. They generally describe the accident scene, the emotions experienced and the consequences, and each in their own way urge the audience to refrain from drinking and driving. The panel operates for the benefit of the victims and promotes healing through the speaker network and support group. The target audience is the court ordered DWI offenders, reaching them with information about injuries and fatalities due to drinking and driving, in an attempt to stop the offenses. VIP sessions are held the third Wednesday of every month at the Shiprock District Court and are normally attended by 25-30 offenders. In addition, we receive referrals from numerous local tribal (Navajo and Ute) and non-tribal (State, federal) courts. Each attendee is required to pay a small modest fee for attending.

In addition, the VIP works closely with victims and surviving family members as they cope with the aftermath. Many times, these families and victims are hindered by strong cultural customs and taboos in dealing with the issues. The coordinator, a surviving family member of a DWI victim, has a very strong understanding of these culturally sensitive issues and has voluntarily assisted many families, victims and offenders. The people who comprise the Shiprock VIP have the greatness of heart and take the courage needed to open their hearts to DWI offenders and share with them their most painful life stories. This is done without blame or anger, but only with the goal of reducing or stopping the offenses. In the process, the victims begin to heal from the horrors of grief suffered as a result of someone's needless and careless actions of driving while intoxicated.

Shiprock VIP also works with local schools, especially before prom, graduation events and holidays, and the community. It provides free drug/alcohol counseling and appropriate referrals to counseling services.

Shiprock VIP greatly appreciates the many years of professional work relationship with Judge Genevieve Woody and her court staff, the probation office/staff, Court Administrator Ethel S. Laughing, the Shiprock Department of Public Safety and Aneth District Court/ Probation Office staff.

For more information and/or a VIP presentation, contact Mr. Perry H. Charley at (505) 368-3514, fax (505) 368-3516 or email: phcharley@dinecollege.edu ■





Justice Day (cont'd. from p. 1)

by DNA Legal Service and a presentation by Judge Irene Black on the Community Court Innovation project. The theme for the day was, “Bringing Justice Back to the Community.”

Shiprock Judicial District had presentations at both the district and family courtrooms. There were presentations by the Peacemaking Program, Probation Program, Nábináhaazláago Initiative, and the Navajo Nation Integrated Justice Information Sharing Project case management system. Chief Justice Herb Yazzie also delivered a special message via video teleconference from the Alamo Court.

Alamo Court hosted a fun walk/run, lunch and Easter egg hunt. The agenda included speeches by Chief Justice Yazzie, President Ben Shelly, Council Delegates Edmund Yazzie and George Apachito, Court Administrator Regina Roanhorse, Probation and Parole Officer Lauren Billy and Judge William J.J. Platero. ■



April 1—Snacking at Window Rock Judicial District courthouse

A History of Navajo Courts

A Navajo dispute resolution system has been in existence since time immemorial with a non-Navajo system implemented in 1882. In 1882, the Secretary of the Interior ordered the Commissioner for Indian Affairs to create courts of Indian offenses. In 1883, the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) was drawn up to govern these courts. In 1892, the Navajo Court of Indian Offenses was established for the Navajo people. Navajo judges were appointed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs agency superintendent and were directed to apply CFR regulations.

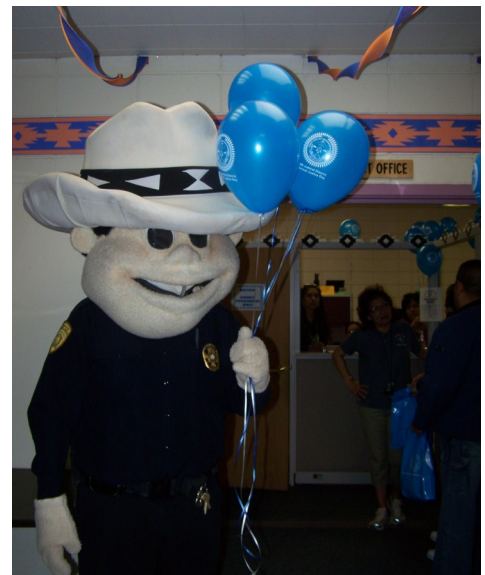
The Navajo tribe took control of its own judicial system starting on April 1, 1959. To ensure that the Navajo courts were free of political influence and bias, the Navajo Tribal Council decided that Navajo tribal judges would be appointed rather than elected “[i]n order to give adequate authority to the judges, obtain the best qualified personnel for the courts and to remove the judges, insofar as possible, from the pressure of politics in making decisions and enforcing the law” Navajo Tribal Council Resolution No. CO-69-58 (October 16, 1958).

The Navajo Nation currently operates a two-level court system: the trial courts and the Navajo Nation Supreme Court. Cases begin in the trial courts. Appeals of trial court decisions and quasi-judicial administrative bodies’ decisions go to the Navajo Nation Supreme Court, which sits in Window Rock, Arizona. Individuals have their rights protected and claims settled fairly in the Navajo Nation courts. The Navajo Nation courts handle over 75,000 cases per year.

The Navajo Nation courts consist of ten judicial districts. One of these districts consists of two satellite courts – Alamo and To’Hajiilee. These judicial districts provide a district court, family court and peacemaking services. The courts located in Arizona are at Tuba City, Kayenta, Dilkon, Chinle, and Window Rock. In New Mexico, they are located at Shiprock, Crownpoint, Ramah, Alamo and To’Hajiilee. In Utah there is a judicial district located in Aneth. ■



April 1—People visit informational tables for Window Rock Judicial District’s Justice Day



April 1—Celebrating Justice Day at Window Rock Judicial District courthouse

Judicial Branch of the Navajo Nation

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Ed Martin, *Director of Judicial Administration*

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Karen Francis, *Judicial Liaison Officer*
Wilfreda Allen, *Office Technician*

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Robbin Preston, *Case Management Officer/Tuba City*
Randall Tsinnie, *Case Management Officer/Tuba City*
Juanita Dennison, *Case Management Supervisor/Tohatchi*
Chanelle Benally, *Case Management Officer/Tohatchi*

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The Official Newsletter of the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch Nábináhaazláago Initiative

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Resource Directory

Department of Corrections

Tohatchi (505) 733-2842/2843
Tuba City (928) 283-3152

Office of the Chief Prosecutor (928) 871-6622

Division of Social Services—The overall mission of the division is to help needy families and individuals living on or near the Navajo Nation. Programs include Navajo Children and Family Services, Child Care Services, Program for Self Reliance, Youth Services Program, Navajo Child Special Advocacy Program and Family Violence Prevention and Services Act.

Child Care Assistance (928) 871-6629
Fort Defiance (928) 729-4013
Chinle (928) 674-2022
Crownpoint (505) 786-2236
Gallup sub-office (505) 726-9387
Tohajiilee sub-office (575) 854-2686
Shiprock (505) 368-1184/1185
Tuba City (928) 283-3250
Tuba City sub-office (928) 283-3266
Southwest sub-office (928) 686-3201

Navajo Area Indian Health Service

Crownpoint New Horizon (505) 786-6232
Chinle I.H.S. Counseling Services (928) 674-7412
Fort Defiance Outpatient Mental Health—counseling, group therapy, inpatient adolescent program, domestic violence/anger management (928) 729-8500
Gallup Indian Medical Center (505) 722-1000
Northern Navajo Medical Center Iina Counseling Services (505) 368-7301
Winslow Indian Health Center Counseling Department (928) 289-6163

Teen Court in Crownpoint—An alternative sentencing program for youth offenders who have committed certain first time offenses (505) 786-6443

Navajo Nation Department of Behavioral Health Services shall increase years of healthy, productive and functional life of Navajo individuals by preventing, reducing or eliminating use, abuse and addiction of alcohol, other mood-altering substances/drugs, mental disorders, domestic violence and abuses.

Fort Defiance (928) 729-4012
Chinle (928) 674-2190
Crownpoint (505) 786-2111
Shiprock (505) 368-1050/1051
Tuba City (928) 283-3031/3032

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern New Mexico—offers children ages 5-18 the extra chance to grow into healthy, productive adults through a professionally supported one-to-one mentoring program.
Main office (505) 983-8360
Gallup office (505) 728-8356

Office of Youth Development/Boys & Girls Club of Diné Nation—serves youth of the Navajo Nation with recreation, youth counseling, career incentive and other programs.

www.dineyouth.com

Fort Defiance (928) 729-4336
Shiprock (505) 368-2511
Crownpoint (505) 786-2000
Tuba City (928) 283-3021/3023
Chinle (928) 674-2064/2361
Boys & Girls Club, Tohatchi (505) 733-2850
Boys & Girls Club, Tuba City (928) 283-3446
Boys & Girls Club, Crownpoint (505) 786-2000
Boys & Girls Club, Fort Defiance (928) 729-4333

Navajo Nation Department of Workforce Development—serves eligible residents of the Navajo Nation with employment and training services

Fort Defiance (928) 729-4180
Crownpoint (505) 786-2151
Tuba City (928) 283-3320

www.navajocourts.org