

Diné Youth & Justice

A Newsletter of the To'hajiilee/Alamo Judicial District of the Judicial Branch of the Navajo Nation

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To'Hajiilee teens say Doo'da to Alcohol!



Thirteen To'Hajiilee Teen Court Youth Council members painted anti-drug signs for their community on Saturday, Jan. 23, 2016 and Saturday, Jan. 30, 2016.

"These kids said they are sick of trash and beer cans in the community," said Eve Shenale, Teen Court Coordinator for Navajo Nation Judicial Branch. "The idea came from the Gen-I challenge," she said.

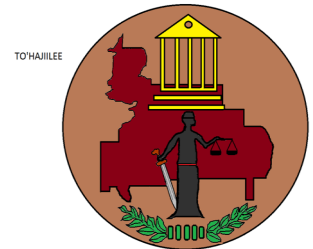
The Gen-I challenge stemmed from the Obama Administration initiative to have Native youth create a positive change in their community. The challenge sparked an interest by To'Hajiilee youth to develop anti-drug messages for the community. It was a nine month project for these youth who wanted to make a difference for their community. It started from a dis-



cussion about the trash and beer cans in the community. Then, they developed a Power Point presentation about "No Drinking and Driving." This message was presented at the 2015 Justice Day Event, Spring Break Event, and 2015 To'Hajiilee Community School parade and pow-wow. The To'Hajiilee Youth Council then prepared their anti-drug billboards for the community.

The entire effort started when the

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Youth Council News

Navajo leaders show support for To'Hajiilee Youth Council



To'Hajiilee Teen Court Youth Council met other youth of the Navajo Nation at the Diné Youth Council Recruitment Meeting on Dec. 21, 2015 in Fort Defiance, Ariz., with their Council Delegate Norman Begay, (Ramah/Alamo/To'Hajiilee). Delegate Begay challenged the To'Hajiilee Youth Council to develop a legislative initiative for the summer council session in 2016.

There were approximately 60 youth gathered at this event sponsored by the Office of Diné Youth. Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez encouraged youth to participate in tribal government. Their goal is to have a youth advisory

council to the Office of President and Vice President.

The Youth Council works with the To'Hajiilee community group and the courts on initiatives to improve the community. The Teen Court Program and Teen Court were created under the Diné Restorative Justice model whereby at Title 1, Section 204(f), it states: Restorative Justice includes teaching children to absorb wisdom, self-knowledge, and knowledge to empower them to make a living and participate in the growth of the Navajo Nation (Diné Customary Law).

The Teen Court Coordinator provides services to three targeted populations: (1) Youth involved in justice system (delinquency, CHINS); (2) youth in school not yet abusing substances (school based training); and (3) youth in the larger Navajo Nation. The goals of the program are to increase knowledge of the Navajo judicial system and restorative justice, increase awareness of substance abuse issues and increase cultural awareness. For the youth involved in teen court proceedings, the goal is to address the issues related to the original arrest and to find services to reduce recidivism. Based on these targeted goals and population, the Teen Court Coordinator provides an array of services for the two communities. This initiative addresses a continuum of care from prevention to intervention specifically for youth. ●



News Briefs

School-based alcohol prevention programming in school

The Alamo-Tohajiilee Judicial District Teen Court works with the Peacemaking Program and the local schools to address substance abuse related problems. They work together to train youth to strengthen their life skills to prevent youth from entering the criminal justice system and to promote restorative justice.

For the Alamo community, the Peacemaking Teen Court Coordinator Eve Shenale, with assistance from Mr. Werner and the Alamo Behavioral Health prevention technicians, completed the rest of the substance abuse prevention life skills program (Botvin), an evidence based substance abuse prevention program. Last fall, 92 ninth graders were served. For the eighth grade students, a total of 187 students were served.

Some of the curriculum includes classes on self-imaging, self-esteem, decision making, pros and cons of tobacco use, and handling stress. The Teen Court and Peacemaking Program are currently working on a dual credit enrollment initiative with Dr. Shawn Secatero and New Mexico State University to deliver this curriculum and Peacemaking life value engagements/traditional teachings for college credit and high school credit.

“It’s an outstanding effort for incorporating Dine teachings with and evidence based program,” said Regina Roanhorse, Court Administrator. “Youth will learn about Dine values and teachings,” she said. ●



September 2015—To’Hajiilee Early Child Head Start Red Ribbon Week

Doo’da to alcohol

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To’Hajiilee Youth council met in 2015 to address their needs and fears. One of the fears was the alcohol abuse that they see in the community. Most evident are the beer cans in the community. To them, the youth said it caused a stigma in the community for people visiting. Not everyone drinks alcohol, said Shenale.

The Teen Court Program is continuing to work in partnership with the Peacemaking Program for the Judicial Branch to help youth develop leadership and life skills. The Teen Court also works with justice involved youth and families. Currently, Teen Court and Peacemaking Program are recruiting young peacemakers. Please contact the To’Hajiilee Judicial District for more information. ●



January 2016—Native American Striking Eagle Invitational Basketball Tournament, University of New Mexico Johnson Center

Meeting Dates

The Youth Council at To'Hajiilee meets regularly. They receive training on dating violence, financial literacy, and the justice system. Come join us!

Next meeting date:

- ◆ To'Hajiilee Monthly Resource Meeting: Thursday, June 16, 2016 (10:00 am—12:00 pm).

Location: **TO'HAJIILEE COURT HOUSE**



TEEN COURT MODEL

The Alamo-To'Hajiilee Teen Court utilizes a peer jury model. When a case is filed against a youth in court, the prosecutor reviews the case. If the child admits to the allegation, then the prosecutor can recommend alternative disposition which includes probation, peacemaking and teen court. The teen court coordinator then sets up a peer panel of youth. The staff attorney trains these youth in the Navajo law and jury process. Then the teen court judge (staff attorney or licensed Navajo Nation Bar Association member) facilitates the process with a script. In the script, youth are given sample questions to ask. Once the youth and parent answer the questions, the peer jury deliberates for community service hours and for letters of apology. Throughout this process, youth involved in the peer jury model learn about the judicial process and so does the justice involved youth and parents. There are other teen court models including a prosecutor-public defender model. The Alamo-To'Hajiilee Teen Courts are a member of the New Mexico Teen Court Association in 2015. ●

**For more information on the
To'hajiilee/Alamo Judicial District,
Peacemaking Teen Court
please contact:**

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