



25th Navajo Nation Council

# 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Speaker Curley thanks Foster Grandparent Volunteers for their love and compassion**



**National Director for AmeriCorps Seniors Atalaya Sergi (third from left, Navajo Nation Speaker Crystalynne Curley (center), and DALTCS Central Administration, Health Service Administrator Sherylene M. Yazzie (third from right).**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** - On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, Speaker Crystalynne Curley took time on Wednesday, June 12, to show her appreciation to volunteers from the Foster Grandparent Program for their work in guiding and supporting young Navajo students.

“As a volunteer your work is guided by love and compassion. It’s not always an easy job. Sometimes you must dig deep within yourself to assist and solve problems. Today, the 25th Navajo Nation Council thanks you for your outstanding volunteerism,” said Speaker Curley.

The Division of Aging and Long-Term Care Support’s (DALTCS) Foster Grandparent Program is supported through funding from AmeriCorps who provides grants to organizations who engage Americans 55 years and older in volunteer service and who provide one-on-one support to children with special needs to improve their academic, social, or emotional development.

The volunteers in this program help children learn to read and provide one-on-one tutoring, mentor trouble teenagers, care for premature infants or children with disabilities, and help children who have been abused or neglected.

Atalaya Sergi, National Director for AmeriCorps Seniors in Washington, D.C., said her team was honored to be able to participate in the recognition ceremony for the program.

“The Foster Grandparent Program on the Navajo Nation is one of the original programs from 1965. It is an honor for our agency to have such a longstanding relationship and partnership with the Navajo Nation,” Sergi said.

Director Sergi said she observed how the Navajo grandparents really care about their community and each other, and how they are really invested in volunteering.

DALTCS Central Administration, Health Service Administrator Sherylene M. Yazzie spoke about when her young son had difficulty adjusting to the classroom setting. She said it was the presence of a grandparent volunteer in his classroom that helped ease his transition into school.

“All of you volunteers make this difference and I want to say thank you,” Yazzie said. “When I was told that grandma was in the classroom, it was a huge relief. This K’é, you can’t get it just anywhere. We’re a communal people.”

Speaker Curley thanked the volunteers for carrying traditional teachings and imparting this knowledge to the children they mentor.

“Our Navajo teachings are sometimes missing in our problem-solving methods at home or at work. We can overcome problems through our traditional teachings, and this is what is so valuable about our foster grandparent volunteers,” Speaker Curley said.

An award ceremony for the volunteers was also held, where Council Delegate Vince R. James served as the master of ceremony.

“Our elders are the real leaders within our communities. The opportunity for our leaders to guide our children is invaluable. We thank our foster grandparent volunteers for their wisdom and generosity,” said Delegate Vince R. James.

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