

T'ÁÁ HWÓ ÁJÍT' ÉEGO

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NAVAJO SELF RELIANCE
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Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance Named National Points of Light Award Winner

PHOENIX, Ariz. – At a National Call to Service Ceremony at the Arizona State University Mercado Center on Nov. 1, the Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance (NNPSR) was awarded the President's Volunteer Service Group Award.

The award was nominated by the Fathers & Families Coalition of America and is an initiative of the Corporation for National and Community Service administered by the Points of Light Institute.

In addition to the group award, Marlinda Littleman, Senior Programs & Projects Specialist at the NNPSR was individually awarded the President's Volunteer National Call to Service Award.

Both the NNPSR and Littleman received certificates of achievement, an official pin and letter of congratulations from President Barack Obama.

Martin Harvier, Vice President of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community addressed the recipients in attendance, "It's an honor to be here and recognize those that serve," said Harvier.

Harvier praised organizations

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Urban Institute and Support Services International Research Flexibility in Tribal TANFs through Visit to Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance



Walter Hillabrant, Ph. D, President, Support Services International, Heather Hahn, Ph. D Senior Research Associate, Urban Institute and Chris Narducci, Research Assistant, Urban Institute pose in front of Window Rock.

WINDOW ROCK – On October 16 - 18, 2012, researchers from the Urban Institute (UI) and Support Services International (SSI), interviewed Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance (NNPSR) staff and customers for a Tribal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) study for the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

At a welcoming session on Tuesday, October 16, Navajo Nation Council Delegate Walter Phelps said, "It's good that you're doing

a study, our people are looking for help."

Honorable Phelps spoke about being an eligibility caseworker for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe before TANF existed. Phelps expressed appreciation for the TANF program that now exists and how they have evolved from the AFDC program.

"T'áá hwó ájít'éego, to do for yourself," said Phelps. "When you do this, you stand on your own,"

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Former NNPSR Customer Blazes Trail In A Man's World



Former NNPSR Customer Melissa Yazzie poses for picture.

SHIPROCK – Melissa Yazzie former customer of the Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance (NNPSR) credits the life skills classes given by Emerson Charley, Training Instructor at the Shiprock Field Office in giving her the skills she needed for success.

Raising three boys alone with no child support, Yazzie turned to the NNPSR for help. It was there she met Marilyn Garcia, Senior Caseworker who gave her encouragement and signed her up for life skills training.

While she was receiving guidance from Charley and Garcia, Yazzie graduated from Din4 College with an associate degree in business administration.

Yazzie began working at the Navajo Nation Fleet Management Office in Shiprock as an Automotive Parts Technician. After she finished

her work assignment, she worked at Navajo Arts & Crafts Enterprise (NACE). Not long after she began at NACE, Navajo Nation Fleet wanted her back.

While at Fleet Management, she has become the Senior Automotive Parts Technician. Yazzie oversees the parts department and fills in other areas when needed.

Being a woman in the automobile business doesn't hold back Yazzie. She admits that she has learned quite a bit about car maintenance while working for Fleet Management.

Being a customer of NNPSR has also taught Yazzie that job skills shouldn't be about doing janitorial work, work that she has done as a customer of NNPSR.

Yazzie gets clients from the NNPSR and from Work Force Development and puts them to work, "I have them type up my purchase requisitions and other similar documents, so that they learn office skills."

"I tell my trainees, you can put that on your resume and in turn, I can also put that on my resume, that I supervised and trained these individuals," said Yazzie.

Yazzie is focused on what she needs to do to become self-reliant. "Emerson Charley was a good instructor, he taught me the four cycles of self-reliance, thinking, planning, doing and growing," said Yazzie. "The way he explained it to me really made sense to me and I was able to apply it to my life."

Yazzie plans to go back to school in Fall 2013, to get her bachelor's degree in management and eventually a master's degree in business management.





Honorable Delegate Walter Phelps of Navajo Nation Council speaks about the concept of T'áá hwó àjít' éego to the Urban Institute and SSI.

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continued Phelps, referring to being a NNPSR customer and the responsibilities it requires. Phelps added, “It’s a way of transferring value,” said Phelps about the concept of *T'áá hwó àjít' éego*.

The three researchers from the Washington DC area are Heather Hahn, Ph. D Senior Research Associate, Urban Institute; Chris Narducci, Research Assistant, Urban Institute and Walter Hillabrant, Ph. D, President, Support Services International, Inc..

Hahn thanked the NNPSR staff and other Navajo Nation programs in attendance. “We’re excited to meet all of you and your customers,” said Hahn. Hahn continued, “We are grateful for anything you are willing to share.”

“We were asked by DHHS to provide a descriptive study of the Tribal TANF programs, of the nine we were given, we chose the Navajo Nation as one of the programs because it is the largest Tribal TANF program,” said Hahn.

The other Tribal TANF programs

included in the study are: Oneida Tribes of Wisconsin TANF, South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency TANF and the Tanana Chiefs Conference TANF.

“We will look at the programs holistically, what context that it exists in and how it fits in the Navajo Nation government,” said Hahn. “We will also look for common themes among the Tribal TANFs and of course what makes them different from state TANFs,” said Hahn.

“After the study is done, we will write a report, that should be available next summer, 2013,” said

Hahn about the final report due to DHHS in June 2013.

Hillabrant, of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, said, “We are here to learn, programs change and grow, we should be able to benefit from your experience.” Hillabrant anticipates the NNPSR will also benefit from the study, “We are hoping the process will be of value to you,” said Hillabrant.

NNPSR Customers Aaron Nez and Melanie Cleveland from Tsaile, Ariz., also spoke to the group. Nez and Cleveland became customers six months ago, “I wasn’t a high school graduate; the NNPSR told



NNPSR Customers Aaron Nez and Melanie Cleveland tell of their successes as customers of NNPSR. Nez has been successful in getting into Navajo Technical College and will start classes in the culinary arts program.



Program Supervisor II, Emmett Begay (middle) gives Hillabrant, Hahn and Narducci (from left to right) a tour of the NNPSR Chinle Field Office.

me to go back to school,” said Nez.

By June, Nez had received his high school diploma with the help of Benson Endolo of New Life Learning Center. In addition to receiving his diploma, Nez is now tutoring his friends in math and science who are now enrolled in school.

Nez plans to start the culinary arts program at NTC (Navajo Technical College) in January. “I just finished my FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) for NTC,” said Nez.

Nez’s girlfriend, Cleveland spoke about how Nez is now inspiring his friends to finish school, “This program really helps a lot of people, it encourages others to help themselves.”

Former customer and now NNPSR Case Management Specialist, LaCosta Johnson spoke about the adversity she faced while attending the University of New Mexico as a customer of the NNPSR.

“I wasn’t sure about my career, I was a victim of domestic violence and a teenage mother but I planned on attending college,” said Johnson. She continued, “I didn’t think it was as hard as it was, driving from Blue Gap to Gallup, classes were daily.” Johnson made a commitment to completing her education and at times had to resort to sleeping in her car.

In 2006, Johnson received an Associate of Arts degree in Human Services and in 2009; she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in social services. “My goal was to be a Senior Caseworker with the Program for Self Reliance,” said Johnson.

In addition to hearing the success stories of current and former



NNPSR Customers participate in a focus group for the study by the Urban Institute and SSI in Chinle, Ariz. Emmett Begay, PSII gives the group a briefing on what the study is about.



Emmett Begay, PSII, NNPSR; Chris Narducci, Urban Institute; Michelle Woody, Senior Caseworker, NNPSR; Dr. Heather Hahn, Urban Institute and Dr. Walter Hillabrant, SSI; talk about NNPSR related issues.

customers the group interviewed other Navajo Nation programs that work with the NNPSR: Child Support Enforcement, Work Force Development, Child Care Development Fund and Head Start.

The group also visited the Chinle and Pinon field offices and held a focus group with 10 NNPSR customers from all over the Navajo Nation to get a more in-depth look at the NNPSR.

The report the group is writing may be a valuable tool for other Tribes considering starting their own Tribal TANF program and may be critical in providing evidence to Congress in continuing support for Tribal TANFs.

Since 1968, the Urban Institute

has been a non-partisan think-tank for the United States government. The Institute conducts research on social and economic programs, collects data, evaluates programs and offers technical advice based on their findings. Many policies have been reshaped based on the Institute’s findings.

A recent study in 2006, by the Institute on health insurance reform in Massachusetts also known as universal health care coverage found that the number of uninsured fell by nearly half. Employer sponsored coverage did not shrink; access to health care has increased and the financial burdens and debt associated with health care have decreased.

Single Father Determined Not to Remain on NNPSR



Former NNPSR customer Frank Hardy poses for picture.

TOYEI – Who knew that listening to the radio can change one’s life. Ask Frank Hardy and he will tell you that his life has changed for the better.

Hardy heard about the Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance (NNPSR) through a radio commercial. The very next day Hardy was at an NNPSR office filling out applications and meeting with caseworkers.

At the time, Hardy was not working, living with his parents and taking care of his three kids.

Former Senior Caseworker Delilah Endischiee gave him words of encouragement and wanted to know what he wanted to do with his life, especially now that he had three little ones to care for, “She asked me hard questions. What are your priorities? What are your goals? Do you have any job experience?”

When Hardy started with NNPSR, he spent time with his kids, reading to them and making sure their needs were met before he started to inquire about his options while receiving benefits. “I didn’t want to be that parent on welfare, so I called my caseworker and asked

what I can do,” said Hardy. “She mentioned life skills training and encouraged me to go and learn.”

Hardy describes what the life skills’ training was about, “I went to parenting classes for two years; it opened my eyes and helped me become a better parent.”

When Hardy’s kids were in Head Start and kindergarten, Hardy’s caseworker told him it was time for the next phase - - time to start school. Hardy received a certificate in construction technology from University of New Mexico. With his certificate, he found work in construction; however, it was sporadic and unreliable.

In 2005, Hardy realized that he needed a steady job and began online classes with the University of Phoenix, studying criminal justice. “I had goals and a timeframe to complete them. These were the skills that I learned from the life skills classes while on the program,” said Hardy.

“I made a check list of goals that I wanted to accomplish. On that list was my AA degree, a bachelor’s degree and eventually a job,” said Hardy.

“I didn’t know what I wanted to do but one my assessments pointed me in the direction of law,” said Hardy.

“There were a lot of barriers, money, transportation and child care but I eventually finished and got my associate degree in Criminal Justice,” said Hardy. Hardy transferred his case to Chinle and Ellouise Begay became his caseworker. “She used to call me and encourage me and tell me to make it happen,” said Hardy.

“One day I called her and told her I was nearing completion of my associate degree and she said, “You’re not going to get far with a GED, I want you to get your high school diploma, she gave me Jerry

Adam’s phone number,” said Hardy. Hardy didn’t think he could do it but with Begay’s encouragement he finished both degrees. “I got my high school diploma one month before I received my associate degree.”

“After I received my degrees, I went to see Ellouise. She spread out some job announcements on her desk and asked me where I wanted to work,” said Hardy. Hardy knew right away, he wanted to work in Toyei at the Navajo Nation Police Academy.

“Ellouise told me that I needed job experience, so I applied at the Chinle Court House and worked with an intake officer, a probation officer and with the Peacemaking program,” said Hardy.

During this time, Hardy continued online classes with the University of Phoenix, studying criminal justice.

Hardy put in his job application with the Police Academy in Toyei in September 2011. “Toyei was the only place I could get the job experience I wanted; I wanted the Toyei job,” said Hardy.

By January 2012, the Police Academy called and said, “You’re hired!”

“I called Ellouise and told her, ‘I got the job!’ My last check from the program was in December 2011,” said Hardy.

Hardy explained that the best way he could thank the NNPSR was to never set foot in a NNPSR office again. “I told Ellouise, you’ll never, ever see me again,” said Hardy.

Hardy received his bachelor of arts degree in criminal justice in October 2012.

Hardy is currently working at the Navajo Police Academy in the Information Management Section as a Police Records Clerk and is studying for the Navajo Nation Bar Exam.



Martin Harvier, Vice President of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (far left) and Marlinda Littleman, NNPSR (4th from left) pose for pictures among the other award winners at an awards ceremony held at ASU Mercado in Phoenix, Arizona.

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that provide skills and increase the significance of a father’s role in a family structure. Harvier also commended individuals who give

their time to important causes and noted that they are worthy of recognition.

Littleman, upon receiving the award on behalf of the NNPSR said, “This award motivates us and

inspires our program to continue work in fatherhood.”

Littleman spoke about the NNPSR’s philosophy of *T’11 hw0-1j7’4ego* – the concept of doing for oneself and of the program’s approach in implementing initiatives such as fatherhood, “At the NNPSR, we also consider culture and language in our approach to fatherhood, there are also teachings that focus on our well-being within the family,” said Littleman.

The Fatherhood Initiative is one of four initiatives that the NNPSR promotes, along with Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Healthy Relationships and Youth. Since the incorporation of the Fatherhood Initiative, the NNPSR has held three fatherhood conferences and is working on doing more research and assessing the needs of Navajo fathers.

