



DSR Customer Strives to Become Kindergarten Teacher



Felicia Begay, student at Navajo Technical University spends her free time studying in the library when she is not in class.

Felicia Begay received her Associates of Applied Science in Early Childhood Multi-Cultural Education from Navajo Technical University (NTU) in 2015, and she is on schedule to also receive her Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, in the fall of 2017.

Felicia, her husband, and their two children, were living in Lyman, CO when Felicia's husband, an ironworker, injured his back. Being injured and not able to work was a big financial blow for the family. Felicia was expecting her third child when the family had moved back to Pinon, Arizona.

To help with income, Felicia began looking for sources of support. She learned of the Department for Self Reliance and applied. As a DSR Customer, she got the assistance she needed for her family and the support she needed to begin working towards her goal of becoming a Kindergarten Teacher.

As the family settled in Pinon, the children enrolled into Pinon Elementary School and Felicia began participating in

the FACE (Family and Child Education) Program. The FACE Program requires constant parental involvement as the program insists on the parents being the child's first and most influential teacher as well as the primary caregiver. "I liked the FACE program, I was always there with my kids, and I got a lot of experience," explained Felicia.

Felicia's eldest daughter, a second grader became frustrated with a substitute teacher, and she told her mother, "You should be a teacher Mom, you are better at it!" Her daughter's comment was what inspired her to pursue becoming a Teacher.

Together, Felicia and her husband decided to make a positive life change that would impact their lives and the lives of their children; they decided to return to school, they applied to NTU. Both were accepted and made a move to Crownpoint, NM. Felicia selected to major in Elementary Education, while her husband majored in Environmental Science.

DSR Customers participating in

post-secondary education can use their classroom hours as authorized work participation hours. "Going to school makes it easier to meet my work participation hours," stated Felicia.

"When I first moved to Crownpoint, my husband and I lived in the dorms, that was the only housing available. My parents and my younger sisters really helped me during this time, they took care of my three kids, until I could get family housing," said Felicia.

After two years of attending NTU, the Begay's were finally able to reunite their family and move into family housing. "I was lucky I was able to get family housing on campus, the only thing is, I have to go to school during the summers to keep our house," said Felicia.

Despite having to push through her academics year round and pass up any breaks, Felicia explains that it is to her advantage, "being in school year-round will mean, I'll be done with school right away. I really want to go home and start teaching." Felicia plans on returning to Pinon to teach.

With Felicia committed to being a year-round, full-time student, her husband made the selfless decision to put her education before his, "my husband was also going to school, but he had to take a break because none of the scholarships I receive pay for summer session classes, so my husband had to find work so we can catch up on our bills."

Most people have the mistaken belief that if you work, you cannot be a DSR Customer. DSR Customers may have a job and still be eligible depending on the amount of their earned income and their family size.

Felicia stated with gratitude, "the incentives I receive for school supplies

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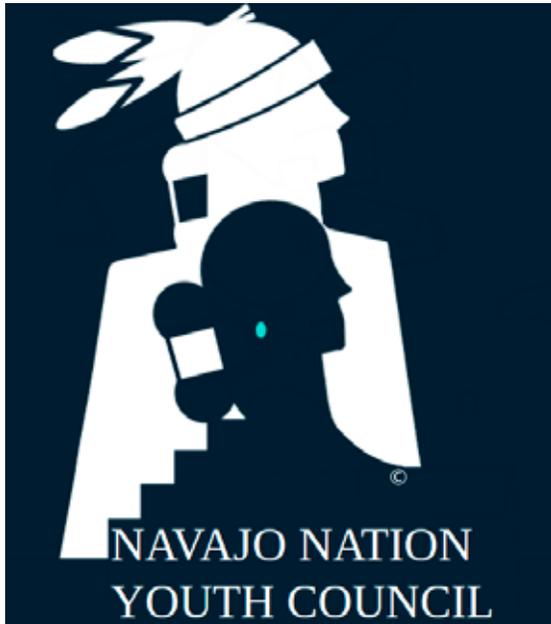
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Navajo Youth Make History!

youth



The Communications Office of the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President announced in a recent press release that the youth of the Navajo Nation has made history!

A historic three-branch agreement, recognizing the Navajo Nation Ad Hoc Youth Council was signed by Navajo Nation President, Russell Begaye and Vice President, Jonathan Nez both of the Executive Branch, LoRenzo Bates, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council Speaker of the Legislative Branch and Acting Chief Justice, Allen Sloan of the Judicial Branch.

“Our youths’ voices and concerns are critical to our future and this three-branch agreement facilitates their presence. This executive order is significant,” stated President Russell Begay.

“Enacting the ad hoc youth council is

another step toward instilling resiliency in our future generations,” said Vice President Jonathan Nez.

The Navajo Nation Ad Hoc Youth Council consists of youth representatives from each of the five Navajo agencies.

Following the approval of the three-branch agreement, President Begaye signed Executive Order 06-2016, Empowering Our Youth; “Recognition of the ad hoc Youth Council,” to notify all tribal divisions, departments and programs of the Navajo Nation that they are to consult with the ad hoc Youth Advisory Council on matters that impact Navajo youth.

The DSR looks forward to collaborating with the Navajo Nation Ad Hoc Youth Council in regards to the DSR special projects and programs developed to empower the Navajo Nation’s Youth and to promote its vision to eliminate the future dependency of children and families on government assistance by promoting T’áá hwó ájít’ éego.

How can the DSR’S Youth get involved? We encourage all DSR youth to join their local Youth Council. As a member of your Youth Council you will have the opportunity to express your concerns and needs for your community. Imagine your community with a skate park, updated playground equipment, or a community youth center, the ideas are limitless.

Join and voice your concerns or ideas to improve your community.

To join or volunteer contact the Navajo Youth Council by email at navajoyouthcouncil@gmail.com or telephone at (928) 266-4534.

For more information, visit their website at [www.navajonationyouthcouncil.wordpress.com] or like their Facebook page for updates.

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Six DSR Customers at the Farmington Office are learning coding from Cultivating Coders, an eight-week intensive, certified boot camp that focuses on web development. The students learn web development language, business skills and some design principles to become independent coders.

The Department for Self Reliance (DSR) has established three new training for DSR Customers to improve their employment and earning potential.

In collaboration with Cultivating Coders out of Albuquerque, NM and the University of New Mexico, Gallup Campus, the DSR's Customers have a chance to become a certified web developer, an emergency medical technician (EMT) or a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).

Cultivating Coders is an eight-week technology training in web development which began on October 3rd, 2016, at both the DSR Gallup and Farmington locations.

Cultivating Coders seek out underserved communities that do not have the local access to coding classes. They bring the coding classroom directly to their student. Students are trained to build web applications and websites using a variety of web

development languages such as HTML, PHP, JavaScript, and more.

DSR Customers enrolled in the Cultivating Coders training will not only learn to code, but they will also be giving back to their community by identifying a community project to assist by developing a web application or website for them.

Partnering with the Cultivating Coders is a great fit for the DSR because they too recognize that local jobs with long-term sustainable income is needed on the Navajo Nation and are finding creative ways to develop those opportunities.

“Native American communities are in need of individuals with coding skills. Currently, when organizations, such as tribal governments or casinos, need help developing websites and software, they often have to contract that work to individuals outside of their community,” stated Charles Ashley, co-founder and

president of Cultivating Coders in the NM News Port published April 2016.

To learn more about Cultivating Coders, visit their website at www.CultivatingCoders.com. They also have a Facebook and Twitter page.

Although the web developer training is already underway, Customers interested in a healthcare career may apply for either the EMT or CNA training.

The Education, Health and Human Services Division of the University of New Mexico (UNM) – Gallup Campus will be offering a sixteen-week EMT-Basic course as well as a sixteen-week Nursing Assistant course beginning January 17, 2016. The EMT Basic Course will begin January 18, 2016, and will require an additional four to six week clinical upon completion of the sixteen-week course.

Selected DSR Customers will attend a reputable healthcare training at the UNM Gallup Campus as New Mexico's Skill Up Network (SUN) Pathway Acceleration in Technology & Healthcare (PATH) students. SUN PATH is a project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Initiative (TAACCCT).

Interested Customers are not required to have a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED), a General Education Diploma (GED) or High School Diploma to be eligible to apply as a SUN PATH student of UNM Gallup Campus.

In fact, this training is created to not only prepare trainees for a career in healthcare but to also strengthen reading, writing and math skills for those who are testing below college level math or English.



Six DSR Customers at the DSR Farmington Office listen attentively. Instructor Charles Sandidge covers web forms. A web form is a page where the user enters data that is sent to the server for processing.



Cultivating Coders Instructor, John Borden is helping a DSR Customer with her first exercise. The coding class is hands-on and the exercises are designed to teach the basic principles building web pages.

With stronger reading, writing and math abilities, Trainees who do not have a high school diploma will have a better chance at passing the HSED or the GED test. For better job search results, employers highly recommend that you earn a high school diploma.

Interested Customers who do have their High School diplomas and may want to enroll in college at a later time will be better prepared to test into college level courses as well.

Customers who are interested in applying for the EMT training must update their immunizations as soon as possible. "One issue that our students always run into is with the HepB vaccination. The vaccination is a three-part series that takes some time to complete. And depending on a hospital's availability, it may take awhile just to get the first vaccine. The sooner

students start on their vaccinations the better," explained Sonya Damon, UNM EMS Director.

Although classes are held at the UNM Gallup Campus, both training opportunities are open to all DSR Customers at all DSR locations. If selected, Customers must plan ahead for meals, transportation and childcare arrangements.

The DSR will offer a Support Service Extended Training to trainees to help assist with the extra costs of meals and transportation expenses. The support service is awarded based on the mileage from residence to training site.

Customers who want more information about the EMT or CNA training opportunities, requirements and Extensive Training Support Service, please speak with your Senior Caseworker.

One of the Department for Self Reliance (DSR) goals established in the Tribal Family Assistance Plan (TFAP) is to increase and strengthen collaboration with local, state, tribal and federal stakeholders to enhance the DSR service delivery and resources for the DSR Customers.

To fulfill this goal, the Navajo Nation Workforce Development (NDWD) program teamed up with the DSR and provided training to DSR Customers, Workforce participants and the public.

NDWD has several programs under their department, Native Employment Works (NEW) Program, (WIA) Workforce Investment Act soon to be the (WIOA) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for Adults and Youth.

In 2014, President Barack Obama signed WIOA to replace the WIA program of 1998. The WIOA is designed to help job seekers get employment, education, training and support services to succeed in the workforce and to match employers with workers.

Brenda Yazzie, Training Instructor for DSR and Alvin Smith, Guidance Information Services (GIS) Counselor for NDWD, both from their respective Crownpoint offices combined their resources to provide classes on Career Decision Making, Using Labor Market, Preparing a Resume, Filling Out Applications, Interviewing Skills and Getting & Keeping a Job.

The training series began June 10, and ended on September 15, this was the first training series held in conjunction with NDWD. Part of the new WIOA states that NDWD can continue working with TANF programs in assisting job seekers in acquiring the skills and credentials they need to meet the employers' needs.

Alvin is certified and provided the instruction for DSR Customers. "The classes that we put together, are classes that we offer through the workforce program," said Alvin.

The training was designed to assist DSR Customers with seeking job opportunities, promoting education and career development for all those who attend.



Twelve women and two men are attending coding class at the DSR Gallup Office. Charles Sandidge of Cultivating Coders said, "We're excited, we've never had this number of women in the class."



Chris Wright, Technology Contractor of Eaglesun Systems presents to the NTUA group about the DSR's upgrades and the maintainence of the system.

The DSR is proud to announce that the DSR was showcased during a presentation from NTUA's Data Center to representatives of the U.S. Senator Tom Udall's office.

Monroe Keedo, NTUA Research and Development Engineer sent an invitation to the DSR's Technology Contractor, Chris Wright with Eaglesun Systems, Inc., to showcase the operations of the DSR's computer hardware, software, network resources and tech services.

The purpose of the presentation was for NTUA's data center to show the progress they have made with the awarded \$32 million from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant. "The DSR has really taken advantage of this, and with all their technology demands they have been influential in the improvement of our Customer and data services here at NTUA," stated Monroe.

In 2014, the DSR began the development of a stable IT system that would control and support the DSR's network reliability and bandwidth demands to improve the DSR's service delivery to their Customers. It was then that the contract between the DSR and Eaglesun was established to modernize DSR's IT infrastructure.

Although the DSR had since upgraded its equipment with state of the art technology, it still struggled with the speed of its internet access, and that is what pushed the DSR to seek out a faster broadband.

Prior to moving to NTUA's fiber broadband, the DSR utilized DSL broadband. Since DSL was oversubscribed, the speed was slow, and the DSR's Customer service was impacted when the system went down or was running slow. Customers would have to wait or return to the DSR office at a later time when the system was down.

With fiber, the DSR can now transfer data faster and in real time. Real-time meaning the actual time that an event is occurring. With access to fiber, real-time video conferencing is now something the DSR can begin to use for Customer training and staff communication.

Video Conferencing has been a benefit that the DSR has been devising and preparing to make available for the DSR Customers. Video conferencing can provide more exposure and access to education, training, resources and services that can improve the lives and well-being of DSR Customers. The DSR staff can use video conferencing for training and meetings by removing the need for travel; it will be both a time and cost savings for the DSR.

Overall, the representatives from Senator Udall's office were impressed with the DSR's IT infrastructure and the NTUA's grant update. Mr. Cummins stated, "I think this is a fantastic example of what the recovery act was meant to do. Nationwide this is very inspirational."

Tuba City DSR Promotes Wellness



DSR Customers do light exercises along with Char Nez at the DSR Tuba City office.

DSR Customers at the Tuba City Department for Self Reliance (DSR) office are given the opportunity to participate in a physical fitness class with DSR Training Instructor, Char Nez, who is also a Certified Instructor in Fitness and Aerobic Exercise.

It is one of the DSR's organizational goals to encourage and support wellness for their Customers. The objective is for each local office to collaborate with their local resources and provide at least one wellness related training session for Customers each quarter. Rather than every quarter, Char leads an average of six DSR Customers through light stretches and exercise to promote healthy living every week.

Since Char has started the classes in 2015, she has focused on more than the Customers physical health. She also promotes mental and emotional health during her classes. "We have to take care of ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually, we have to take care of ourselves so that we can be there for our children," stated Char.

Char started off her class on September 30, 2016, with an open discussion about the benefits of making healthy choices. Everyone in class is comfortable enough to open up and share their experiences with healthy living.

DSR Customer, Nora Tsinnie said that she walks every day and eats healthy. "I did the Steamboat Walk with Char; it was six miles in the snow and rain. We earned a t-shirt and some other stuff," said Nora.

Nora also shared that she sets the example for her family and grandchildren, she challenges her



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and clothing really help us financially, our benefits only pay for our basic needs. I have been receiving scholarships to pay for school, but they only pay for some expenses, not all of them.”

With the support and the sacrifices made by the Begay family, Felicia is an Honors Student at NTU and the elected NTU Student Senate Treasurer. Felicia also makes time to participate in a workgroup for improving campus housing, and she helped start a club for student teachers that advocate for children’s rights in the local schools.

Felicia’s expressed with excitement

how she chose to teach Kindergarten, “the session I took this past summer, exposed me to the different grades and levels that children learn as they advance through school, it was this class that helped me choose to teach Kindergarten. I am choosing to teach Kindergarten because the student’s minds are fresh, they want to learn.”

She can’t wait to begin teaching her students about vocabulary, “I’m excited to teach the young students new words, expose them to different situations, such as being at the auto mechanics shop or the doctor’s office and teaching them which words are appropriate for those settings,” said Felicia.

Studying early childhood education has also been beneficial for Felicia’s children, “I learned about being a parent, learned how to talk to them, how to motivate them,” said Felicia, she continued, “The younger one really likes school, he enjoys Kindergarten.”

Felicia said, “I am really looking forward to this semester! I will be in the classroom for six weeks as a student teacher.”

The DSR appreciates the Begay’s for sharing their story and exhibiting the qualities of T’áá hwó ajít’éego for their children and their community.

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family to walk with her every day, “Sometimes I tell them, ‘Grandma beat you!’”

Another DSR Customer, Sherry Begay stated, “The class helps me with the little bit of exercise I do at home. It also helps to learn about the importance of good health for your body.”

Before dismissing her class, Char

suggested some ways for her students to stay enthused about physical wellness, “Try different things, activities that you like to do to get yourself motivated, like yoga, running and walking.”

Char also recommended using a calendar to stay motivated, “Write down the activities you complete, and soon you will see your calendar fill-up. At the end of the month, you will see what you’ve accomplished.”

Char ended her session with a goal for the group; they will be participating in the upcoming Run/Walk and Zumba event at the Tuba City Fair on October 12 & 13, 2016.

Tuba City DSR Customers interested in attending the wellness sessions contact your Senior Caseworker to enroll. For more information about the wellness class contact Char Nez at (928) 283-6613.