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**For Immediate Release**

March 1, 2023

**“NDSS’ Community Outreach Initiative Continues.”**

**To’Hajiilee, N. Mex.** – The Navajo Division of Social Services (NDSS) held a community meeting with the To’Hajiilee Navajo Chapter on Wednesday, February 22, 2023, to provide information on NDSS services, departments, and programs.

During the 25<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council Winter Session, in January 2023, when Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren delivered his State of the Navajo Nation, Navajo Nation Council Delegate Norman M. Begay reported the lack of social services in Alamo, Ramah, and To’Hajiilee chapters, and requested Navajo Nation President Nygren for NDSS staff visit his chapters.

Participants included Navajo Nation Council Delegate Begay, To’Hajiilee Navajo Chapter Community Services Coordinator Sherrilyn Apache, and a handful of community members.



Community member, Mark Begay shared, “It’s good we had this dialogue and I appreciate it.” The Community members present, agreed that there is a need for an NDSS staff member to be in To’Hajiilee to help guide them through the application process for financial assistance, as well as inform them on the different services available.

*To’Hajiilee community members, NDSS Executive Director Thomas Cody, NDSS staff, Council Delegate Norman Begay, and Sherrilyn Apache.*

Every Tuesday, starting February 28, 2023, Ms. Chelmarie Jones, Administrative Services Officer with the Office of the Executive Director will be in the community of To’Hajiilee to accept applications for assistance and to answer questions regarding NDSS services.

Ms. Jones will also be training local entities on the financial assistance application process. Until further notice, Ms. Jones will be set up at the To’Hajiilee Chapter House on Tuesdays from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

*The Navajo Division of Social Services (NDSS) is under the Executive Branch of the Navajo Nation's three-branch government. Under the leadership of the NDSS Executive Director, NDSS programs and departments provide social services and human services, consistent with professional social work ethics and values, and human services in accordance with Navajo cultural values to help reduce and alleviate hardship.*



The Navajo Nation  
**Division of Social Services**  
Office of the Executive Director

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At the meeting, community members requested for the NDSS to set up at other locations throughout To'Hajiilee, such as the Senior Center or at the schools. "We are open to accommodating the community's requests for Ms. Jones to set up at other locations besides the Chapter House. This will require coordinated efforts between Ms. Jones and the community representatives," stated Executive Director Thomas Cody.

The NDSS' community outreach initiative will continue for the next six months to result in: improved service delivery processes and standards, removal barriers and complexities from access to direct service, partnerships with community leaders to secure itinerant NDSS locations, and an opportunity for local Navajo people to provide input on how human and social services are delivered in their unique communities.

"The NDSS is on a mission to visit as many communities as possible. We need community input and support to improve our services," shared Cody.

Due to inclement weather, the NDSS had to postpone their, February 23, 2023, Alamo visit. Rescheduled date will be announced as it becomes available.

The following community visits are currently scheduled in March. March 6, 2023, Chinle Chapter from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, and March 8, 2023, Birdsprings Chapter from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The public and local leadership are welcomed to attend.

Chapter officials and Council Delegates are encouraged to reach out to the NDSS Office of the Executive Director to schedule a community visit by contacting Mrs. Valentina Redhorse, Administrative Assistant with the Office of the Executive Director at (928) 871-6851.

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