



Office of the Executive Director

Navajo Division for Children and Family Services



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MAKING RIBBON SKIRTS A WELLNESS ACTIVITY FOR VETERANS



The Navajo Division for Children and Family Services (NDCFS) and the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration (NNVA) hosted the first in a series of ribbon skirt and medicine bag making workshops for Navajo veterans on September 22-23 in Window Rock, Ariz.

NDCFS Executive Director Thomas Cody wanted to incorporate culture into the message of family violence prevention through the workshops with a theme of, “Culture is Healing.” The workshops are also a way to address mental health and well-being for Navajo veterans.

The two-day workshop was taught by Bonnie Woody of Steamboat Canyon. She has been designing fashion all her life and her work has taken her around the world.

“This was really fun,” Woody said. “For me, beadwork or any craft I do is therapeutic. It really takes your mind off things. It helps you calm down. It helps you to concentrate.”

The morning of the first day was dedicated to educational presentations. Anthony Begay, Program Manager for Navajo Treatment Center for Children and Their Families, presented on mental well-being



and Althea James, Victim Witness Advocate for Department of Family Services, presented on family violence prevention.

On the second day, Geraldine Kinsel-Begay, Tribal Outreach Coordinator for the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services, gave a presentation on services and benefits available for veterans in Arizona.

Between presentations throughout the two days, the veterans got to work cutting, ironing and sewing. The supplies and equipment were provided.



Tikesha Echeverria from Mexican Springs, N.M., made a ribbon skirt for the first time during the session.

“It took my mind off everything else because to make the skirt it was a lot of attention to detail. It took a lot of focus... It brought me back to the task at hand and I forgot about everything else that was going on,” she said.

“The instructor was very good. She took us step by step and if we needed help, she helped us one on one,” Echeverria said.

She added that the presentations were informational and were good resources to pass on to people who need them.

Another veteran who completed her skirt exclaimed, “I’m so glad I came!”



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The workshops were offered utilizing the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Family Violence Prevention and Services Grant.

These types of activities help the NDCFS fulfill its vision “to promote the holistic and cultural values of T’áá hwó ájít’éego and K’e to individuals and families to have safer and healthier communities for future generations.”

Veterans may contact the Veterans Office at the site they are interested in attending to sign up. Workshops are also scheduled for September 25-26 at the Crownpoint Veterans Organization Building in Crownpoint, N.M.; September 29-30 at the NNVA Western Agency Office Conference Room in Tuba City, Ariz.; October 6-7 at the Chinle Navajo Veterans Organization Conference Building in Chinle, Ariz.; and October 15-16 at the Bureau of Indian Affairs Nataani Nez Building Complex in Shiprock, N.M.

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