Pro Golfer
NOTAH BEGAY

ALSO SEE
Navajo Ministries’
NEW SCHOOL TEACHER
Education and Activity Center – Swinging Into Action!

More work has been accomplished on the future Education and Activity Center at Navajo Ministries in the past few months, including installation of two new sturdy swing sets to the north of the new school facility. A big thank you goes out to the San Juan Rotary Club for helping to purchase and assemble the swing sets. Members of the club are pictured here putting together the swings on August 30th. While much of the outside is now complete, nearly $300,000 in work is still needed on the inside of the 8,000-square-foot building. The next priority is about $50,000 to complete the venting and duct work for the heating and air conditioning system.

Please consider partnering with us to complete this much-needed new school and activity center for the children entrusted in our care. The building is phase one of the larger Navajo Heritage Center project.

To make a financial gift to this amazing project, please use the envelope located in the center of this magazine. Simply write “Education and Activity Center” on the inside of the envelope, and you will be helping move this project closer to completion.

More information on the overall Navajo Heritage Center project is available at www.NavajoHeritageCenter.org, or by contacting Director of Development Eric Fisher at 505.324.5260 or Fisher@NavajoMinistries.org.

Items Needed for Christmas Connections

Each Christmas season, Navajo Ministries partners with Navajo pastors to help collect and deliver food, toys, Bibles, blankets and other items to needy families on the massive Navajo Nation. Navajo Ministries is again collecting these items for this year’s Christmas Connections, which will help more than 300 families in remote areas of the Navajo Nation.

Some of the items needed include:

- Health supplies such as shampoo, conditioner, soaps, toothbrushes and toothpaste, lotion, combs, brushes, and bandaids.
- School supplies such as pencils, pens, notebook paper, spiral notebooks, erasers, crayons, pencil crayons, rulers, etc.
- New tea towels, pot holders and dish cloths are great for the older women.
- Men’s socks, work gloves and batteries are ideal for the older men.
- Caps, mittens, new socks are great for the kids.

More information on Christmas Connections needs is available by contacting Director of Partnership Ministry Kay Baker at kbaker@NavajoMinistries.org, or 505-324-5236.
Dear Readers,

The entire staff at Navajo Ministries welcomes you to the Fall 2011 edition of Navajo Neighbors, a magazine that focuses on the outstanding work God is doing each day through the programs of this organization.

This issue features a cover story on well-known Navajo professional golfer Notah Begay, a four-time winner on the PGA Tour and an emerging leader among Native Americans in the United States. His own foundation is working hard to battle obesity and diabetes among American Indians, and he is highly involved in a number of other ventures. Notah made a stop in Farmington for the San Juan Open in June and he was nice enough to give us time for an interview.

Other stories in this issue include:
- President Jim Baker received a rare honor as a guest “actor” in the local outdoor production of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.”
- The Four Corners Home for Children took part in a successful Peer Review during the summer months.
- Navajo Ministries welcomed a new teacher, Tawnya Vollmert, to our On-site School.
- KNMI Vertical Radio just came off a very active summer, highlighted by Connie Mack World Series baseball and community service efforts.

And, there’s much more in the pages to follow. Enjoy — and thank you for your support and prayers for Navajo Ministries.

God Bless,

Eric Fisher
Editor and Director of Development
Earlier this summer I was asked if I would like to have a cameo role in the upcoming summer theater production of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” that is put on by the city of Farmington. After learning that I would have only three lines to memorize I agreed to portray the role of Jacob, father to Joseph.

Shortly thereafter I was informed, “And, we prefer that you ‘sing’ your lines.” Sing?!? I never really sang any solos before except for the times during the Navajoland Tour at the Grand Canyon devotions when I began leading a chorus that nobody knew. After talking with Devin Neeley, our radio General Manager, who was in this same production five years ago, he assured me that I would do just fine with singing those lines. And so the practicing began.

When August 4th arrived, I found myself in the dressing and make-up room behind the scenes of this dramatic outdoor venue nestled in the sandstone outcroppings north of Farmington. As show time neared, the actors did physical stretching exercises to prepare them for their dancing performances. Then singing exercises that stretched both their faces and vocal cords began. I looked on with relief that my singing debut would be brief.

The evening was lovely. And, the crowd was great; one of the largest of the season with 450 in attendance. I sang my lines, dramatized grief and despair when told that my son Joseph was killed, and rejoiced when placing the colorful coat on him at the end of the show.

Most of my time was spent behind the scenes observing the action that goes on as costume changes are made quickly between songs. Props were moved on and off the stage and on two occasions performers had remote microphones that needed to receive attention and then moved quickly back to their positions without being detected by the audience.

As I think about my view from behind the scenes, I am reminded of the view that God has in our lives. We are often limited in seeing the big picture as God sees it. We experience heartaches and sadness at times when tragedy and difficulties come our way, but Father God knows what is best for His children and allows us to go through these challenges so that we can grow and help others make it through their storms of life.

Even in the story of Joseph we see him experience the pain of rejection from his own brothers after they sold him into slavery. Joseph was eventually thrown into prison because of lying accusations. What a comfort it is to read in Genesis 39:21, “But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him …”

As in all successful productions and accomplishments (including Navajo Ministries), it is important to realize that the “show” would not go on without those many workers behind the scenes who make the project or program a quality event or outreach. We are blessed to have many talented team members who are doing just that here in this ministry. How thankful I am for friends like you who stand behind the scenes and support us with your prayers and gifts.

James D. Baker, President
Navajo Ministries Celebrates Graduation

For the second year in a row, Navajo Ministries saw one of its own receive a diploma from Farmington High School. Michelle Begaye, pictured with some of the children who live on grounds as part of the Four Corners Home for Children program, graduated in mid-May and plans to pursue a career in nursing.

Michelle first came to live at Navajo Ministries as a fifth-grader. During her high school years, she became very active in school activities and her smile always brought joy to those she met. We wish Michelle nothing but the best – and we’re very proud of her!

Navajo Ministries President Receives Special Award

Jim Baker, President of Navajo Ministries, received a Seniors Recognition Award for outstanding community contributions from the New Mexico Office of African American Affairs on May 21 at the Farmington Public Library. Pictured with Jim are Farmington Mayor Tommy Roberts (center) and Dr. Harold Bailey, Executive Director of the New Mexico Office of African American Affairs. Congratulations, Jim, on a well-deserved honor.

Childcare Program Student Earns Recognition

Teeyah Smith, a seventh-grader at Tibbetts Middle School in Farmington and one of the children in our care at the Four Corners Home for Children, received Junior National Honor Society recognition in a spring ceremony at Piedra Vista High School’s auditorium.

Teeyah was one of just a few students from Tibbetts to earn the Junior National Honor Society distinction for her work in the classroom and as a leader in her school. Teeyah spent most of her elementary years at the On-Site School at Navajo Ministries, and is now excelling at the middle-school level. Congratulations to Teeyah!

Montrose Teams Complete Much-needed Projects

Thank you to the adult and youth volunteer work teams from First Presbyterian Church in Montrose, Colorado, who helped complete projects this spring and summer at Navajo Ministries. The First Presbyterian volunteers planted sod, performed landscaping, put in a sprinkler system and put a new roof on the irrigation pump house, among other projects. All of you are terrific partners, and we sincerely appreciate the help.

(Contined on page 9)
Pro Golfer
NOTAH BEGAY

Four-time PGA Tour winner serves as inspirational leader for Navajo people

By Eric Fisher

Removing his cap to reveal a quick smile, Notah Begay sat on one of the outdoor benches at San Juan Country Club, remembering the last time he played tournament golf in Farmington, New Mexico.

“I played here in 1992 as an amateur. Yes, a lot has changed in 20 years,” said Begay, the only full-blooded American Indian on the PGA Tour. Begay, who is half Navajo and Pueblo Indian, has won four PGA Tour tournaments and is one of just a handful of players to ever shoot a round of 59 in a professional event. He was in Farmington in June to play in the annual San Juan Open, which served as a tune-up tournament for his full-time return to the PGA Tour.

Begay’s PGA Tour wins came about a decade ago, when he was a shining young star in professional golf. A pair of bad back injuries, the first coming in late 2000, sidetracked his career as one of the top players in the game. Begay didn’t let those injuries, along with some early personal setbacks, derail his plans to help make a difference for Native American tribes and families.

In 2005, Notah launched the Notah Begay III Foundation, an organization that works to battle obesity and diabetes among American Indian young people. His work with the foundation brings him to the Navajo Nation often.

“Diabetes is such a terrible problem … There are a myriad of issues facing the Navajo Nation and its citizens, but sometimes simple health, nutrition and exercise are overlooked. Poor health has some long-term negative impacts. It affects your quality of life in many ways. With the foundation, we’re trying to establish proactive measures to help prevent childhood obesity and diabetes,” Begay said.

The 39-year-old Begay has also started his own beef and seafood company called KivaFoods. A portion of the company’s global sales goes to his foundation. And, if those ventures weren’t enough, he owns a golf course development firm that works exclusively with American Indian communities to develop world-class
“I’m also married and live in Dallas now,” he added. “My wife (Apryl) and I have two children. There’s a lot going on in my life right now.”

A graduate and All-American golfer at Stanford University, Begay helped lead the Cardinal golf team to the 1994 NCAA national championship. He also played at Stanford with good friend Tiger Woods, who he still talks to by phone several times a week. Notah says he continues to try and be a loyal friend to Woods, who won 14 major golf titles before going through a series of personal and professional struggles.

“I was down there at his place in Florida for a week in February,” Begay said. “I’ve tried to support him during these recent troubles. I’ve tried to be a good listener, and a good friend.”

Begay’s golf game wasn’t quite where he wanted it to be this summer. He didn’t make the cut at the San Juan Open and had some difficulties on the PGA Tour in July. Even so, he said he’s glad to be back playing the game he loves.

“Golf is one of those things that you have to stay on top of … You have to play every single day, but I’m excited and feeling as good as I’ve felt in a long time. My trainers, doctors and therapist all have worked 100 percent toward making me healthy. I’m looking forward to competing at the highest level against the best players in the world.”

A Homecoming for New Mexico’s Notah Begay

Born and raised primarily in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Begay said he always enjoys “coming home” to the Southwest.

“New Mexico is home to me. I will come back to die in New Mexico at one point. I love it here,” Begay said as he prepared to hit the driving range before the San Juan Open in Farmington.

He also said he routinely visits the Navajo Nation, which is located in the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. His trips to Navajoland are often business-related, or to provide needed guidance to Navajo young people.

“I try to stay in touch with the leadership of the Navajo Nation. I’m interested in bringing back my experience and expertise to help in any way I can. I play golf and am friends with people who run multi-million dollar corporations. I’ve learned a lot over the years just being around them.”

Begay has a degree in economics from Stanford to go with the real-life experiences he’s seen on and off the golf course. He calls the degree he earned at the prestigious Stanford the biggest achievement of his life.

Begay also learned a valuable life lesson when he was 27 and had just earned more than $2 million in one year playing golf. He was arrested for driving while intoxicated in Albuquerque and was forced to spend a week in jail. Looking inward at the choices he was making, he knew he didn’t want to repeat that situation.

“I’ve really tried to better myself and make the changes that needed to be made,” he said. “It’s just important to keep pushing forward the concepts of equipping young kids to make good choices for themselves, whether it’s educational, life skills, health, or spirituality.”

Begay was raised Catholic.

(Continued)
and graduated high school from Albuquerque Academy. Not only was he a state champion golfer, he also helped lead the school to the first of six consecutive state basketball titles.

“I got a great education at Academy. It certainly helped get me ready for Stanford,” he said.

Even if his professional game never approaches the successes he used to enjoy, Notah Begay has many other ventures that will continue to define him. His foundation, for example, has already built successful youth golf and soccer programs on New Mexico tribal lands. He said once the models and data are perfected, the organization will take the strategies learned to other American Indian tribes.

Begay also is looking forward to developing golf courses for Native Americans. This spring he unveiled his first “signature” golf course with the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation north of Topeka, Kansas.

“Native American tribes have 220 native-owned gaming facilities in the U.S., and less than 50 percent have a golf course. Golf course development has essentially stopped throughout the United States, except on Native American lands,” he said.

Begay spent part of his childhood living near Window Rock, Arizona – the capital city of the Navajo Nation. He has long hoped for better days for the Navajo people, many of whom still live without running water or electricity. He said education, economic development, health and many other improvements must happen for the Navajo to realize their true potential.

“The Navajo Nation has a big opportunity. There are many resources there, including natural resources and talented people. It will take a leap of faith to change things,” he said. “The majority of the revenues are exported off the reservation … There has to be more of an effort to keep money on

(Continued)
Pauline Plummer Presented with Special Print

Pauline Plummer, the widow of former Navajo Heritage Center Task Force Co-Chair Marshall Plummer, was presented with a special Mark Silversmith print in May for her support of the capital campaign at Navajo Ministries.

Marshall Plummer passed away in March 2010 and was the first Vice President of the Navajo Nation from 1991-1995. He also was a highly respected local leader, and a long-time Government Relations Manager at Arizona Public Service-Four Corners Power Plant. APS and Navajo Ministries combined on July 16 to organize the second annual Marshall Plummer Charity Golf Tournament, with all proceeds benefiting the Navajo Heritage Center project.

Navajo Ministries Featured on Revelations TV Series

Navajo Ministries will be featured as part of the Revelations TV Series in the coming months. The Florida-based Horizon Media Studios visited the ministry’s campus in May to film for the 30-minute program, which airs on five networks nationwide. For more on the Revelations TV Series, visit the Horizon Media Studios Web site at www.hmsinc.org.

We thank Pastor Chuck Reich, Executive Producer and host of the series, and the entire Horizon Media Studios team for their work on the program, and their commitment to sharing God’s love throughout the country and beyond.

Pauline, a healthcare worker in Shiprock, is also now a member of the Navajo Heritage Center Task Force, a group of community leaders who are raising awareness for the project. Phase one includes the under-construction Education and Activity Center (see page 2), followed by other phases that will include a Navajo Heritage Center museum-based experience. Go to www.NavajoHeritageCenter.org to learn more, or contact Director of Development Eric Fisher, 505.325.5260, or Fisher@NavajoMinistries.org.

Notah Begay has a rich family tradition. He carries the name of both his father and grandfather, who was one of the U.S. military’s famed Code Talkers who helped win World War II by utilizing an unbreakable code based on the Navajo language.

“I never met my grandfather, but I’ve heard all of the stories about how he and many others helped win the war as Code Talkers. I’m very proud of him for his service in protecting the freedoms we enjoy today,” Begay added.

Begay realizes that many of his successes in life have come from the game of golf. To use a golf analogy, he continues to stay focused both on and off the course – always trying to keep his priorities moving straight down the fairway.

“I’ve been very fortunate … I’m now trying to set a standard that others can follow,” he added.

Navajo Ministries will be featured as part of the Revelations TV Series in

the Navajo Nation, providing needed opportunities and jobs.”

News and Views continued...
Peer Review Beneficial for Childcare Program

By Annette Hall

Every two years the Four Corners Home for Children goes through a Peer Review conducted by administrators from other children’s homes in our state association. This is done to ensure that we are in compliance with our own New Mexico Christian Child Care Association regulations.

It can be a long and arduous day as the three or four Peer Review Team members take different sections of the regulations and search through our personnel files, children’s files and policy manuals. They inspect the grounds and homes as well as interview staff, children, board members and community members we have on hand for the day. It can feel like we are under a microscope and, in a way we are, but it is all for good reason.

There is often a healthy spirit of competition between the staff conducting the review and the staff in the home being reviewed. That is all in good fun but the review itself is a task we all take seriously because we desire to serve God in the manner He has called us to serve. We also want to care for the children He has entrusted to us, and do that to the best of our ability.

The concept of teamwork and holding one another accountable did not originate in the corporate world; it is a Biblical principle. God formed the very first team in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve and He has been in the team-building business ever since.

Working in ministry can be hard; we can begin to feel like we are alone on the front lines and have no one to turn to who truly understands, much less having someone to come alongside us to encourage us or to help. That is another reason our Peer Reviews are extremely important. We are good for each other, we build each other up and we support each other.

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.” - Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Our Peer Review was a grand success and I believe that to be because of the awesome team God has brought together and set in place at Navajo Ministries. We all have different jobs, different responsibilities and different roles to play but we strive to “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

-Colossians 3:17

“But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased ... and if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored all the members rejoice with it.”

-1 Corinthians 12:18, 26

Annette Hall is Director of Children and Family Services at Navajo Ministries.

Employment Opportunities:

We currently have positions open in our childcare department for FULL-TIME HOUSEPARENTS.

If you are interested in joining our team and playing a significant role in the lives of our children, please contact Annette Hall at 505.324.5231 or Annette@NavajoMinistries.org
Navajo Ministries Welcomes New Teacher

The Navajo Ministries On-Site School welcomed new teacher Tawnya Vollmert in mid-August. We’re very glad to have her on board as our fourth teacher since the on-campus elementary school began in 1999. In her own words, here is Tawnya’s story:

Life in Christ is full of twists, turns, and adventure. I’m Tawnya Vollmert and I’m getting ready to begin a new adventure here at Navajo Ministries. I have the privilege of starting to teach here this fall.

It was 23 years ago this month that my parents helped me move from Oklahoma to Farmington to start a different adventure. I began teaching third grade at Northeast Elementary. I had no idea that Northeast would become my home for so long.

During my time there, I taught third grade, a second-third multi-age class, and rotated with students from third to fourth. I’ve also made many dear friends among my colleagues and developed strong relationships with students and their families.

While living here, I have been a part of Emmanuel Baptist Church. It is where I met my husband, Steve, and where we married. I was part of the music ministry for years, singing in choirs and playing hand bells. When I’m enjoying some down time, I enjoy quilting, making baskets, reading, gardening, hiking and camping. The Four Corners area truly became my home.

Now I begin another adventure. Leaving Northeast Elementary was not an easy choice, but my heart could not say no to this opportunity. I look forward to getting to know each of the children. It will be exciting to teach children of different ages over several years so that I can watch them mature.

Most importantly, I’ve longed to more directly make Christ part of my classroom. I believe that true learning is dispelling darkness. Making Jesus, the Light of the World, a part of our classroom excites me because there is no better way to deepen understanding than to shine Christ’s light on all we learn.

Again, we welcome Tawnya to the Navajo Ministries Family!
health affects our mental health, our emotional health affects our physical health, and so on.

Any medical doctor can explain the benefits of maintaining a physically active lifestyle. The medical community understands the importance of becoming active after surgery for healing, keeping joints moving for joint health and cardiovascular exercise for heart benefits, to name just a few. The same is true for maintaining your mental and emotional state. When we stay active through exercise, interacting with others, eating healthy and exploring the wonders of our environments, we can actually change brain chemistry, which ultimately affects mental health.

An important aspect of therapeutic intervention is helping individuals and families make lifestyle changes that will increase the likelihood of healthy brain chemistry. Change does not happen quickly. That is why we call it a lifestyle change. Exercising 30 minutes daily for three months can help our brain cope with depressive or anxious symptoms. Getting small amounts of sunshine daily can help decrease the negative aspects of mood disorders.

In our sedentary world of computer games, television and cyberspace interaction, inserting proper exercise into our daily routine becomes a challenge. Too many families no longer bicycle together, take walks together in the park or do yard work together. Perhaps it is time we change our lifestyles to incorporate old-fashioned ideas into family schedules. We will all be happier and healthier as a result!

Bill and Linda Eubank are licensed professional clinical counselors at The Counseling Center at Navajo Ministries.
This summer we were blessed to have several teams of young people and adults come to Navajo Ministries providing manual labor and spiritual guidance. Here on the campus they provided us with some landscaping work, which included retaining walls near our new Education and Activity Center that is currently under construction. On the Navajo Nation, the teams helped churches present a VBS (Vacation Bible School) program that brought in many children from the surrounding area.

While these VBS programs provide fun, excitement and spiritual growth for the Navajo boys and girls, it also serves as a growing time for those who come to share. One student said, “This trip has changed my life. This was my first mission trip, but not my last.” And, a pastor with one team said, “This is the most well-rounded ministry experience that I have had in many years of VBS and working mission trips.”

These VBS days are very special times for the Navajo children as they build relationships with the young people who come to share God’s love with them. A teenage mom attended the last two days at one of the churches and said, “I had the best time ever. Thank you!”

These summer VBS Connections provide ministry for young people and growth for the children who come to listen and learn from God’s Word. We are also thankful for the prayers and financial support from our friends who make these days possible.

- **June 14-17:** First Presbyterian Montrose, Colorado - Teec Nos Pos Christian Reformed Church.
- **June 28-July 1:** Concordia Lutheran, Steamboat Springs, Colorado - Kimbeto Valley BIC.
- **July 12-15:** Vineyard Church of Knox County, Ohio - Cudei Full Gospel Church.
- **July 26-29:** Cedar Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Hudsonville, Michigan - Desert View Church.
By Devin Neeley

KNMI Vertical Radio’s staff just came off a packed summer of baseball, community service and, as always, quality Christian radio.

We were blessed and excited to be the official home of the Connie Mack World Series at Ricketts Park in Farmington from August 5-12. Our outstanding broadcasters made this one of our best years yet. I would love to name all the staff that was responsible, but time and space won’t allow it. Thanks to everyone involved, and we’re already looking forward to next year!

We also assisted the Salvation Army with its annual Stuff the Pack Campaign, collecting school supplies to distribute to children in need in San Juan County. There was a great outpouring from our community, even in our current economy, and we want to thank everyone involved. We are privileged to serve our community through programs like this, as it impacts young students on the road to an eventual lifetime of success.

Earlier this summer, KNMI Vertical Radio also took part in the annual Kid Fest event at McGee Park, an event that drew more than 10,000 people. Cindy Verhaar, host of “The Saturday Show,” broadcasted live from Kid Fest, while more than 80 children stopped by the remote Vertical booth to record themselves.

Finally, on a sad note, we are losing one of our voices at KNMI Vertical Radio. Brandi Wright, co-host of the Morning Show, is going to school at Howard Payne in Brownwood, Texas, to study to become a youth pastor. Not only has she been called to the ministry but I know that she has a heart for it and that heart, like the Grinch’s, is three sizes too big. We will miss her, but I know that the path God has set for her is awesome and we are glad to be a stop on the journey.

Devin Neeley is the General Manager of KNMI Vertical Radio.
Memories – A Gift from God

Time marches on, doesn’t it? Sometimes we don’t realize how quickly the days slip by until we get out some old photo albums and marvel at what we looked like 30 or 40 years ago. These little strolls down memory lane give us opportunities to reflect on the many and varied paths that God has allowed us to experience over the years.

Many of these memories are good. Some bring sadness as we think about how things used to be during another season of our lives. It’s during these times that we remember that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

One of the ways that many of our Navajo Ministries friends use to remember loved ones who have gone on to their eternal reward is through Living Memorials. Through this program your gift benefits the lives of boys and girls living here at the Four Corners Home for Children while remembering the life of your loved one. We also welcome gifts that are In Honor of a friend or relative who is still living.

An attractive card reflecting the beauty of Navajoland will be sent to the family of the one you are recognizing. No amounts will be mentioned. Please indicate your wishes on the envelope that is attached to this magazine. All gifts are tax deductible and will be receipted.

Living Memorials Through August 2011

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Labels and Box Tops for Education

Here’s Your Chance to Get Involved!

The new school year has begun and we are excited about the Labels for Education and Box Tops for Education that have been sent in all summer. Last school year, nearly $4,000 was raised through the Box Tops for Education program! We also continue to collect Campbell’s Labels in hopes of purchasing new equipment for the Education and Activity Center when it opens.

To make collections easier and even more fun, we now have Campbell’s Collection Bins available for churches, civic groups or other organizations that would like to collect Campbell’s UPCs and Box Tops for Education for our On-Site School.

If you are interested in receiving a Collection Box (8 inches square) to aid in your saving of UPCs and Boxtops for Navajo Ministries School, please contact Kay Baker at kbaker@NavajoMinistries.org or call 505.324.5236. We’ll be glad to send you one!

For more information on the programs, please go to boxtops4education.com and labelsforeducation.com