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Navajo Ministries helps the people we serve through programs that instill hope, restoration and Christian values.

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ABOUT NAVAJO MINISTRIES
Navajo Ministries was established in 1953 for the purpose of caring for dependent children, regardless of race, religion or national origin, and for printing and distributing Navajo tracts and hymnals.

The ministry has expanded over the years to include: a non-commercial Christian radio station, KNMI Vertical Radio 88.9 FM and Navajo Nation Outreach, providing spiritual, emotional and material encouragement to those living in Navajoland.

When a donor expresses a preference as to the use of donated funds, Navajo Ministries will make every effort to honor their request and in most cases this is done in exact compliance with the donor's wishes. However, the Board of Directors, in ensuring that Navajo Ministries carries out its exempt purposes required by law and effectivley uses available funds, accepts the responsibility of applying funds in accordance with objectives of the ministry.

Views and opinions expressed in Navajo Neighbors by those interviewed are not necessarily those of Navajo Ministries.

Navajo Ministries is a Charter Member in good standing with ECFA (Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability).

LETTER FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR
I’m very excited about the Fall 2016 edition of Navajo Neighbors magazine. The stories are always inspiring, but this issue touches me personally for many reasons.

The cover story features an amazing family, good friends, and an important part of The Arc of San Juan County, a non-profit that I am involved with that advocates for people with disabilities. Writing this article reminded me of how important real relationships are in our lives. I have enjoyed meaningful friendships with these two for the past several years, but sitting down and listening to their story truly blessed and encouraged me. I hope it will do the same for you.

Also inside this issue:

• A story about Jennifer and how she has grown in the past three years living at the Four Corners Home for Children.

• Change brings opportunity at the Navajo Ministries School. What hasn’t changed is our commitment to giving the children in our care the best education possible through the new “Learning Center” concept.

• People from all over the country came to Navajo Ministries this summer to change lives through Vacation Bible Schools in the Navajo Nation.

• Vertical Radio congratulates Brandi on a recent career change, welcomes Randall in the mid-days, and wins another NMBa award.

Don’t forget to like Navajo Ministries and the Four Corners Home for Children Facebook pages. We just produced a new video that you don’t want to miss!

God Bless and thank you for your support,
Diana Lang
Director of Development and Managing Editor

Fall 2016 • Volume 10, Number 2

4 FROM THE PRESIDENT
Children are the Heartbeat of Our Calling

5 NEWS AND VIEWS

6 COVER STORY
Mark & Melissa Silversmith: Be the Change

10 FOUR CORNERS HOME FOR CHILDREN
Jennifer Experiencing Immense Growth

11 LEARNING CENTER
Changes Bring New Opportunities

12 NEWS AND VIEWS CONTINUED
EUBANK COUNSELING CENTER UPDATE
Times: They Are A Changing

13 NAVAJO NATION OUTREACH
Friends to Our Navajo Neighbors

14 KNMI VERTICAL RADIO
We Are ... Vertical Radio

15 LIVING MEMORIALS
Precious Memories

Contents

4 FROM THE PRESIDENT
Children are the Heartbeat of Our Calling

5 NEWS AND VIEWS

6 COVER STORY
Mark & Melissa Silversmith: Be the Change

10 FOUR CORNERS HOME FOR CHILDREN
Jennifer Experiencing Immense Growth

11 LEARNING CENTER
Changes Bring New Opportunities

12 NEWS AND VIEWS CONTINUED
EUBANK COUNSELING CENTER UPDATE
Times: They Are A Changing

13 NAVAJO NATION OUTREACH
Friends to Our Navajo Neighbors

14 KNMI VERTICAL RADIO
We Are ... Vertical Radio

15 LIVING MEMORIALS
Precious Memories

Contents
“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” – Matthew 19:14.

Jesus said those very words, reminding the disciples of the true importance and value of children. They are so precious, innocent, loving and pure in heart. Their smiles light up a room; their laughter can make any problem disappear. Children are a wonderful, amazing gift from God, and must be loved and protected.

Navajo Ministries was founded in 1953 by Jack Drake, who started what was then known as Navajo Missions for the purpose of caring for dependent children who had nowhere else to go. Following much prayer, Jack was led to build a single children’s home to care for a handful of Navajo children. Some of those first children who lived at Navajo Missions in the 1950s remain in contact with us. They are thankful for the time they had here – a time when they knew they were loved, protected and safe.

More than 60 years later, children are still at the forefront of all we do at Navajo Ministries. Today, on a beautiful 16-acre campus, we operate the Four Corners Home for Children, KNMI Vertical Radio and Navajo Nation Outreach programs.

Hundreds of children, ranging in age from newborn babies to 18 years of age, have come through the Four Corners Home for Children, receiving the hope and restoration they yearn for during a difficult period in their lives. Our incredible staff helps provide the safety and stability they require, and most importantly, they are shown the unending love of Jesus. “Come to me” are His words to children. It is our privilege to be able to introduce so many young ones to the best friend they will ever have.

Children, their parents and many others also find a family-friendly Christian radio station to listen to when they discover our very own KNMI Vertical Radio. This station started in 1980 as the first Christian radio station in the Four Corners, and continues today as one of the most popular stations in the region.

And, the Navajo Nation Outreach program brings Vacation Bible Schools to many children each summer, followed by gifts, food, blankets and more during Christmas Connections.

Some of you know about the recent financial struggles we have had due to a depressed local energy industry in northwest New Mexico. Many non-profits, churches, businesses, governments and schools have been severely affected in our state. We were forced to close our smallest children’s home (emergency placement) earlier this summer, and then received difficult news that our funding was cut for the Navajo Ministries School a short time later.

We continue to always trust in God for whatever He has in store for us. We are seeing God move through Navajo Ministries each and every day. If you would like to partner with us or want more information, contact us or stop by for a visit at 2103 West Main Street in Farmington.

God Bless,

Eric Fisher, President

Children are the Heartbeat of Our Calling
Lost and Found

This past summer we had a God moment with this cute dog Bugs. He belongs to the Youngs and lives in the House of Love with all the boys. They took him to Navajo Lake State Park for a day camping trip, and when it got to be time to head home he was nowhere to be found. After searching for several hours the boys came home without Bugs. Lots of tears were shed. Mr. Cliff, the foster dad, could not sleep. He knew that Bugs was not safe. He grabbed his harmonica and headed back to the lake to look.

Bugs likes the joyful noise of the harmonica as you can see from the photo below. It has been played for him many times before. A while later Mr. Cliff called home to say that he had not found Bugs. He said that he had decided to play one more song, and then head home. Guess what happened? God answers prayer in his own time. Bugs came running and he and Mr. Cliff returned home. Everything was as it should be. We are so glad Bugs is safe! God watches out for all of his creatures. ◇

Thank You to the Judays

We had a special time of food and fellowship in honor of Bob and Brenda Juday, who recently retired from their ministry at the Four Corners Home for Children. The Judays have served God their entire adult lives, including here at Navajo Ministries for four years. They served in a variety of positions including house parents, mentors, and Grandpa and Grandma. They will be missed here on campus, but luckily they are still in town and will come in for a visit, and Bob is volunteering for our new after-school program. ◇

EMS Appreciation Luncheon

The children at the Four Corners Home for Children participated in a service project this summer in appreciation of all local emergency responders. We extended an open invitation and had no idea how many folks might attend. Everyone was greeted at the door by one of the children and given a handmade card. We had a contest to see who could draw the most creative card, and the kids gave the judges a run for their money. Taylor drew the winning entry and received a Walmart gift card for his efforts.

Our cook, Rolanda Jeffrey, did an awesome job preparing the Navajo tacos and we even had homemade cookies for dessert. The officers filed in; Farmington Police Department, with Chief Hebbe (pictured above), San Juan County Fire, and EMS were all represented. We fed about 30 people!

But what was really awesome was the fellowship. The children in our care have had many negative experiences with the police. They have seen family members arrested and have been taught to fear the very people who are committed to keeping them safe. One youngster said, “I gave them a card when they arrived. They liked it and they were nice!” The officers were equally impressed by the children. When asked recently if he would like to do another service project, Taylor said a resounding YES! Looks like these kids were born to serve. ◇
By Diana Lang

Mark Silversmith and his sister Melissa Silversmith-Firestone have had tender hearts toward the Lord since they can remember. This shows through every day in their love of people and service to the community. They both credit their parents, Barbara and Mark Silversmith Sr., with laying the groundwork for the lives that they are now leading. Mark Sr. is an artist whose work is sold at a variety of Native American galleries throughout the country. Barbara is a school counselor whose heart for children carried over into her own kids.

“Our parents gave us a foundation, but within that foundation, they allowed room for grace,” said Melissa. “They taught us that even though we were going to make mistakes, they would always love, support and forgive us.”

Mark wholeheartedly agreed. “Before you build a house you need a solid foundation. Our foundation growing up was God and teachings from the Bible. Even though some windows got broken within our house when we were young and foolish, we were still standing on solid ground. The house couldn’t be moved because of the solid foundation,” he said.

In addition to the love and support that their parents showed them, Barbara believes in the power of prayer. To this day she prays for her children every morning and evening. “I had grace because of my mom’s prayers,” said Mark. He remembered a time in high school that his life was spared and he believes his mom’s prayers for safety were the reason.

“I was a dumb teenage kid,” he said. “I was 16 years old and I got hit by a car. I was taken down the road several feet and had to hop off the moving
vehicle.” Mark somehow managed to land on his feet, and said that he felt two hands under his arms that intervened to protect him.

Mark admits that there were times in his life that he did not walk closely with God. But even during those times, he knew his Lord was never far away. After his graduation from the Anderson School of Business at the University of New Mexico, Mark once again dedicated his life to Christ.

“I had recently completed my business degree, and was planning on traveling through Europe on a back-packing adventure. I needed to save some money, and Melissa told me about a job opening at The Arc of San Juan County,” Mark said.

Mark knew that the local thrift store had some problems that he could fix. His plan was to move back to Farmington temporarily, help the Arc Store with a new business model, and get out of town and on with his European tour. But Mark didn’t know that God had other plans for his life.

“The job at The Arc was a huge blessing in my life when I really needed it. Until then I lived for me. I lived for money and status,” explained Mark. “I put myself in the back when I got this job and started focusing on people. I learned a lot about loving all people, despite their abilities.”

And that’s when life really started to change for Mark. God blessed him with some property and a house. He focused on family and Christ. “I loved the job at the Arc,” he said. “Learning about people with disabilities and working with them was great. I enjoyed figuring out each person’s strengths and full on abilities. I fell in love with the mission, the board of directors and made wonderful friendships.”

Melissa is actively involved in the Arc as well. She joined the Arc Board of Directors almost five years ago. She was approached to donate a painting for the Arc’s annual fundraiser, and has been working with the non-profit ever since. She teaches art classes and helps with advocacy. “I never dreamed I would be on the board this long,” she said. “I found out there was a little budget for art, and I started teaching workshops. I met so many incredible people and I fell in love”.

As she spent more time working with people of all different abilities, she grew personally and spiritually. “I realized that people with disabilities are just like you and me. For some reason there is something that stops you from going up and talking to someone that is different. I don’t know anybody that doesn’t like a friendly smile and acknowledgment.”

It didn’t take Melissa long to overcome her fear, and embrace the diversity of abilities. “I used to worry, what if I speak to a person with a disability and they are non-
verbal? But what if they aren’t? Working with the Arc got me out of myself and helped me make friends in the community who are different than me. I enjoy finding all of their capabilities.”

Melissa’s heart for service isn’t limited to Farmington. She did her first mission trip while still in high school and has served in South America, China, Panama, and most recently in India and Nepal. “Every mission trip changes your life,” she said. “But my recent trip to India and Nepal was my first mission trip as an adult, and the reality of people’s situations hit me hard. I saw children standing naked in the train station begging for anything: food, clothing, money. But there was nothing that I could do.”

Melissa quickly realized that she was powerless in the moment. If she gave these hurting children food, they would likely be mobbed and beaten up. If she gave them money, it would immediately be stolen and turned over to the pimp that placed them in the situation to begin with. She broke down crying, and turned to the leaders of her group and asked, “What are we going to do?”

The answer to her question became very clear. “The fact that I couldn’t do anything immediately was difficult. If nothing else, you just want to pick us these children and hold them. But what I learned in India is that it all comes down to education. Anytime you go to a place like this you leave a piece of your heart and soul.”

But what left the biggest impression on Melissa was the realization; “I’m living in the middle of a third world country right here, the Navajo Reservation. Children don’t have clothes, a bed or a roof over their head. Sometimes the severity of the situation makes you want to quit before you ever get started. It’s so easy to just see what is not working, and lose sight of what is working. There are certain things that you can do to use your gifts to make a difference. That is where I am now. What can I do for the glory of God?”

Both Silversmith siblings agree that there is great need right here in Farmington. Working at the Arc Store, Mark and Melissa have many opportunities to help people in the community. “Whether we are working with the homeless in the downtown area, someone that doesn’t have a coat in the winter, or helping a family that has lost everything in a disaster. A lot of good people donate to the Arc. One of our core values is to help others in need,” said Mark. In the last four years that Mark has been in charge, many programs have been put into place to “pay it forward and bless people.”
Mark has recently embarked on a brand new journey that he is feeling God call him to. The whole thing started with a group of guys from various churches in the community with a common goal; to love God and help people. Mission Music Ministries (MX3) was born.

What started as a group of guys wanting to study the Bible morphed into an amazing ministry. They bought a trailer, and a variety of lawn maintenance equipment. They reached out to people in their respective churches who might not be physically able to take care of their own yards, and started mowing lawns for free. In addition to MX3, Mark is passionate about helping men in crisis. Straight Up Ministry, located in Farmington, offers a men’s transitional home as an alternative to incarceration. The men in the program must have a job, pay their own expenses, and they are required to participate in Celebrate Recovery meetings. “There’s so much need for a program like this in our community. Our hope is to increase capacity to 15-20 beds in the future,” said Mark.

Luke 10:27 says, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all of your mind, and ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

“Love God and love people and you are doing what you need to do. Everything else will fall into place when you focus on these two things. It will determine your actions, behavior, your addictions … it will determine everything. I try to live my life by this. If something comes my way and it’s not of God, I don’t have to mess with it. I don’t worry, it’s not my business,” he said.

It is obvious that Mark and Melissa love each other, (they were hilarious in this photo shoot), their parents, the community and the Lord. They love people, and their hearts for service are evident. As the interview came to an end, Mark summed things up with a memory from the Changing Seasons, Changing Lives annual Arc fundraiser. The event celebrates diversity and abilities. Mark choked up as he shared, “I remember the gentleman that we had as our speaker a few years back. When I first met the guy I remember thinking, ‘poor guy, there’s nothing in there.’ But when I heard him speak through his communication device he shouted to me. Hey, I’m in here. Don’t judge me by what you see. Give me a chance to show my abilities. That experience taught me everything.”

Mark and Melissa won’t be busy resting on their laurels anytime soon. The Arc of San Juan County recently opened a second satellite store, Arc Too. Mark supervises over 15 employees, half of whom have a disability. Melissa works as an advocate, yoga instructor, and owns a business, Palettes and Paints. “Whenever I put my heart out there, people are more willing to put their heart out there too,” said Mark. Family, community and the Lord; that’s definitely where these two hearts live and breathe.

The mission of the Arc of San Juan County is to advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The Arc of San Juan County is the last local Arc chapter in the state of New Mexico.

For more information about the Arc go to www.arcofsanjuancounty.org.
One of the bright smiles here at Navajo Ministries is our Jennifer. She is growing up to be a wonderful young lady. She has been here for about three years now, and we have seen such wonderful growth. This summer I nominated Jennifer to participate in a program called S.A.L.T. at Cross Bar X Youth Ranch. That stands for Student Adventure Leadership Training. Jennifer was accepted and then she had to raise money to go, which she did. She says she just wanted to get out of the house, but she did so much more.

She was able to meet new people, and formed special relationships with other “SALTY’s” and counselors, as well as younger campers. She said, “I enjoyed getting to know people, especially being able to serve and bond with the younger campers.” As she served, she was also ministered to, as she felt a special connection with the daily leadership devotions from 1 John. Jennifer got a bird’s eye view of what goes on behind the scenes, as well as firsthand experience in what leadership truly is.

As she served and led, Jennifer was introduced to the different ways people can lead. She learned lots of team-building skills; it takes a team of leaders to get the job done. She also found out that sometimes leading is taking someone by the arm and moving them, and sometimes it means acts of service. Jennifer tends to gravitate toward the latter. Our world needs servant leaders who will be more concerned about others than themselves. I think we have one in Jennifer. Jennifer said she was pushed to her limits – she even won an award for Endurance! That is so awesome! That is a perfect testimony to hard work and the kind of person Jennifer is. Watch out world – here she comes!

Jennifer – we are all so proud of the young lady you are and the one you are becoming.

Jennifer Experiencing Immense Growth

By Randall Jeffrey

It has been a difficult summer. Our local economy has struggled, which has affected our finances, and we had to make long-term decisions to protect what God has entrusted us with. We closed our crisis home, the House of Hope, in June. The LeBeanes in the House of Love returned to Illinois, and we decided to alter our model of houseparenting along with other major cutbacks. A staff of ladies are now rotating through the home at various schedules. All said, we have cut more than 10 percent of our annual budget. We were also forced to make changes at our school, which you can read about in our Learning Center section.

Despite these difficulties, we rely fully upon God. We are looking to Him and not our circumstances. He is always faithful, and as we look to Him to lead us, we trust that He will continue to bless what He is leading us to do here.
Changes Bring New Opportunities

By Diana Lang

We received some very difficult news this summer from Farmington Municipal Schools Superintendent Gene Schmidt. Recent losses in state funding from the massive decline in oil and gas revenues, coupled with declines in student enrollment forced the district to make nearly $5 million in cuts for the current school year. Many positions in the district were eliminated, including our teaching staff at the Navajo Ministries School.

We are very disappointed about the school, but the timing seems to be working out well. We started this school year with only two elementary students who are attending McCormick Elementary. They seem to be adjusting well, although one admitted that she definitely liked attending school here on campus much better.

With change comes opportunity. That is how our “After-School” program was born. As the Navajo Ministries leadership team discussed the educational needs of the children in our care as well as the best use for our Education and Activity Center, we decided to implement a program that would benefit all of the children, not just the elementary schoolers. The after-school time will include a homework club, music, arts and crafts, and other activities. We will also be offering a variety of life skills programs such as sewing, cooking, health, fitness and stress management.

We have been blessed with many wonderful volunteers already to help us achieve this goal. We have students coming from Navajo Preparatory School, retired teachers, and staff members who will mentor, tutor, and teach. We even have Delbert Anderson, a professional musician, teaching piano lessons.

On a side note, we will still be accepting Box Tops for Education labels this school year. They will be sent to McCormick, where they can still benefit our kids.

While this school year will be different, we are committed to ensuring that all of the children get the best education possible. We are also very excited about the opportunity to teach some skills, habits and hobbies that the children can enjoy for a lifetime.
Another Amazing Bi-Fly Fishing Tournament

Huge thanks to everyone that helped to make this year’s San Juan River Bi-Fly Tournament a success. Nearly 50 anglers competed August 19-20 to raise more than $69,000 for the Four Corners Home for Children.

“Imagine taking the great sport of fly fishing, adding the awesome San Juan River, and mixing in dedicated guides and anglers. Cool with mountain-fed water, season with beautiful fish, and bake in the sun of southwestern skies and you have the recipe for the San Juan Bi-Fly Tournament. What a way to make a difference in the lives of hurting children,” said Bob Fitz, tournament director.

Major sponsors for the Bi-Fly included Citizens Bank, Outback Steakhouse, San Juan Regional Medical Center and San Juan Rotary Club.

Times: They Are A Changing

By Linda Eubank

You would have to live alone on an uninhabited island to not realize that our kids live in a different world than the one we grew up in, especially if you are a Baby Boomer. Our generation had so much prosperity and opportunity that our children and grandchildren know nothing else. Most of them have never done without.

The stress for parents is how to teach responsibility, respect and thankfulness in such a world. I often sit with parents and we shake our heads together. So what can we do? Some parents choose to get their children involved in community service; perhaps a food kitchen over the holidays would be a good experience. Other parents insist their teen have a part-time job. I agree with both of these approaches.

Too many kids are given a car, a college education and the best of everything without having to make a personal investment. If you insist that your children work for something, they may look at you like you have lost your mind. But who’s in charge? Who is responsible for creating a healthy environment for a mature and responsible adult to grow up in?

Maybe your children will not like or appreciate you while they are a teen, but I guarantee they will later. Don’t be the parent who wants to be a best friend to their teenager. Be a parent who makes tough love choices. I am not saying don’t support your child’s education, but they should have some financial investment in the process. It obviously means more to all of us when we work toward reaching our full potential.

Yes, times are changing. But God never changes. He still expects us to love, be responsible, and live honestly. Don’t let these times dictate the kind of parent that you will be.

Linda Eubank is a licensed professional clinical counselor with the Eubank Counseling Center, located on the campus of Navajo Ministries. Two-thirds of her clients are children ranging in age from 3 to 17.
Once again we were blessed this summer with some wonderful VBS teams! Each team comes from various parts of the country, stays in our Bunkhouse, does a work project on grounds, and then spends four days conducting a VBS in Navajoland. It is such a blessing to see the excitement and energy that our teams have as they minister to Navajo children, and teach them about Jesus. Some of these children are hearing about Him for the very first time!

Our teams this year ranged from 8-12 people, with some adults but mostly teenagers and a few young ones. Each team did a great job at the church they were at; ministering to the kids with games, activities, music, crafts, and Bible lessons - lots of fun and a whole lot of Jesus!

Our teams this year were from Grace Community Church, Hilton Head, South Carolina; Trinity United Methodist Church, Smithfield, Virginia; Vineyard Church of Knox County, Mount Vernon, Ohio; and Bethlehem Lutheran, Nekoosa, Wisconsin. We appreciate our teams and the hearts they have for children in Navajoland. We count them all as friends. VBS teams are one of the highlights of our year and we can’t wait to see them again soon!
Since 1980, Vertical Radio has provided Christian music, information, inspiration and more recently, sports to people in the Four Corners region, and nationwide (online at www.VerticalRadio.org). We are a non-profit, listener-supported station that provides programming for the entire family. Vertical Radio is the number one Christian radio station in the Farmington market, was voted Best Radio Station by the Farmington Daily Times readers for the third year in a row, and won another New Mexico Broadcasters Association award for Best Sports Play by Play.

With life and growth comes change. As you know, change can be difficult, but can also present us with wonderful opportunities. This is exactly what happened this past summer with some of our Vertical Radio crew.

Brandi Wright is embracing the changes in her life, but also recognized that something had to give, and decided the time had come to leave the morning show. We are very sad to see her go, but she will continue to host the afternoon drive, and will remain an integral part of the Vertical team.

On July 28, Brandi started a position at Sexual Assault Services of Northwest New Mexico, an organization that has been helping survivors overcome sexual assault situations since 2004. Brandi will be working as a Staff Advocate and Prevention Educator.

“I am very excited to be serving people in a different capacity than I have before,” she said. In addition to the position at SASNM, Brandi recently started a new youth group for middle and high school age youth at New Covenant United Methodist Church.

Other changes in the Vertical crew include our own Navajo Ministries Campus Manager Randall Jeffrey working the mid-days. “Buckle up, you’re riding with Randall,” is his signature tag line. “I really enjoy being on Vertical because it gives me one more avenue to offer encouragement to people,” he said.

We are …Vertical Radio!
Back in the 1920s songwriter Johnny Wright wrote a song about the memories he had of days gone by. Many singers have sung his words over the years. “Precious memories; how they linger, how they ever flood my soul. In the stillness of the midnight, precious sacred scenes unfold.”

It’s hard to believe that a year has passed since Kay and I released our book of precious memories, “The Bakers’ Dozen and Then Some.” God provided us with so many blessings over the years. I’m sure you, too, have experienced His comfort as you reflect on His goodness to you and your family.

Some of our precious memories are of family and friends who have passed on to their eternal reward. This page is reserved in each issue of this magazine for you to remember those who have departed or honor those still living. Your Memorial gift will benefit the boys and girls living here at the Four Corners Home for Children. It’s because of friends like you that children from broken homes can have some good memories while in our care. An attractive card will be sent to the family of the one you are memorializing or honoring. No amounts are ever mentioned. Please use the envelope attached in this magazine to respond with your gift.

If you would like a signed copy of our book, you can enclose a separate check made payable to Navajo Ministries for $18, which includes shipping. The proceeds of this book of our “precious memories” also benefit the care of the children.

Jim & Kay Baker,
Co-Directors of Partnership Ministry
SPONSOR a specific child or one of the children’s homes at the Four Corners Home For Children for $25 A MONTH (or more) and receive monthly updates, photos and biographical information.

Call KAY BAKER at 888.325.0255 For More Information