NAVAJO NEIGHBORS
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EDUCATION AND ACTIVITY CENTER
GRAND OPENING!
A TIME OF GREAT NEED

Since the summer of 2012, the Four Corners Home for Children program has been filled to near capacity due to a dramatic increase in need for services. At the same time, operational funding for this invaluable program has seen consistent decreases in recent years. The need has never been greater, but the overall funding to provide for essential services such as food, clothing and transportation has been stretched too thin.

Your sponsorship of the Four Corners Home for Children, which is licensed to care for up to 28 children, will make an amazing difference in young people’s lives. Will you join us today in helping to bring hope and restoration to children? We thank you for your interest, and your prayers for this life-changing program.

If you would like to sponsor the Four Corners Home for Children, at $25 a month, please fill out the envelope in the center of this magazine. You will also get consistent updates on the children you are helping support.
Dear Readers,

The year 2013 is a pretty big one for Navajo Ministries. Back in the summer of 1953, founder Jack Drake started what would become known as “Navajo Missions.” Jack stepped out in faith in what would become one in a series of noteworthy milestones in the past six decades.

This year, we are celebrating our 60th anniversary all year long. When Jack Drake first pitched a borrowed tent on this plot of land in Farmington, New Mexico, it’s doubtful he could envision what would later become a 16-acre campus filled with people doing God’s work. When we let God do the work, though, amazing things happen.

What Jack started long ago has grown into a thriving, multi-faceted ministry. Inside this issue of Navajo Ministries, President Jim Baker writes about 60 years of blessings. And, while we’re on the topic of milestones, we celebrated another big event in October with the opening of the new Education and Activity Center. See inside for a complete recap of a wonderful Grand Opening celebration.

God is doing great things here on a daily basis. Sometimes, it’s a large opening of a new facility. More often, though, it’s the simple joys: A hurting child who learns to laugh again, a student who finally “gets it” in math class, a radio listener who receives hope through a song, a struggling Navajo family who receives unexpected gifts at Christmas time. These are just a few of many examples of God’s hand in people’s lives.

We hope you enjoy this latest issue of Navajo Neighbors. And, if you’re in the neighborhood, stop by and see us!

God Bless,
Eric Fisher
Editor and Vice President
Celebrating 60 Years of Blessings

This year will mark six decades of ministry at Navajo Ministries (formerly Navajo Missions). As I reflect on the history of this place, there are two words that come to mind – God’s faithfulness.

It was my privilege to know the founder, Jack Drake, who responded to God’s call and moved from Michigan to Farmington, New Mexico to share God’s Word with the Navajo people. It was 1953 when Navajo Missions officially became a beacon of hope to many Navajo families who were struggling to provide for the needs of their families.

A borrowed tent became his home as the first house for children was being constructed on the grounds on the west edge of Farmington. As friends from near and far heard of this new mission in Navajoland, funds began arriving and one home became two and then three. An office building was added, which included a print shop and later a Christian bookstore.

By the time Kay and I arrived in 1975, 13 buildings and mobile homes were scattered throughout the upper level of the growing campus. By the early 1980s a new administration building, the Communication Center, was constructed to provide studios for KNMI Radio, the first Christian station in the Four Corners Region. This building also provided office space for the growing staff and included a mini auditorium and two Prayer Rooms.

A small ranch program has provided good experiences for the children over the years. The interaction and care of the animals have been a blessing both physically and emotionally for the youngsters. A barn fire about 30 years ago brought many community friends our way to help us raise a new barn in just three days! It was a reminder of the Amish barn raisings that were part of our environment in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Two new homes for children were opened in 2001 and 2002 on the lower level of our campus, providing very efficient housing that is near the playground and outdoor gazebo picnic area. And, just this past fall we were able to celebrate the Grand Opening of our new Education and Activity Center (see the story and photos inside this issue). While we still need additional funds to cover the final construction costs, we are extending our faith in God to meet those needs during these next three years.

In recent months we have seen an overwhelming influx of new children who have needed our care. Our homes are near capacity. During a one-month period of time we were forced to turn down 24 children! New houseparents, the Jeffreys, arrived in the fall and the Judays are now filling in as interim parents until a new couple is found. (See their story inside).

I am so thankful for friends both near and far who provide funds, prayers and volunteer hours to this ministry. We have seen God provide for our needs since 1953 … 60 years of blessings. Great is His faithfulness!
‘Uncle Art’ Retires
After 30 Years

Art Hickmott, affectionately know as “Uncle Art” to friends and family, retired from employment with Navajo Ministries at the end of 2012 following 30 years of faithful, dedicated service.

Art, who moved to Farmington from Michigan in the early 1980s to do “mission” work here, has been an invaluable asset to the ministry. He worked in maintenance for years, and was our “go-to” expert when it came to the organization’s automotive needs. Fortunately, Art will continue to live on grounds at Navajo Ministries and will serve us on a volunteer basis.

We thank you, Art, for everything. And, we’re so glad we’ll still be able to enjoy your pleasant smile and warm greeting as we continue to do God’s work together. God has blessed us to know you, and to be your friend all these years.

BHP Billiton, ConocoPhillips Make Large Donations

BHP Billiton and ConocoPhillips recently made large financial contributions to Navajo Ministries.

We are so thankful for corporate partners like BHP Billiton and ConocoPhillips. They are truly helping make a dramatic difference in young people’s lives.

Miss Navajos Visit On-Site School

Sisters Koltey Tso and JoDawna Tso visited the Navajo Ministries School in December to stress the importance of education and give insights into their own cultural experiences.

Koltey Tso is the current Miss Diné College, while JoDawna Tso is serving as Miss Navajo at San Juan College in Farmington. Both focused on how important good behavior in the classroom is, along with always remembering to thank their teachers for helping them succeed. The students also had plenty of questions about what it’s like to become “Miss Navajo.”

“Your education can take you very far in life,” JoDawna said. “Be sure to make the most of your opportunities.”

Navajo Ministries Hosts Annual Live Nativity

In what has become an annual tradition, Navajo Ministries hosted the Live Navajo Nativity on December 22 as the children from the Four Corners Home for Children portrayed the real reason for the Christmas season.

Hundreds of visitors drove through the grounds of the decorated 16-acre campus, hearing live Navajo choirs singing Christmas carols and seeing many of the ministry’s animals joining in the warmth of the evening’s celebration of Christ’s birth.
By Eric Fisher

More than 150 friends and supporters helped Navajo Ministries celebrate a great milestone on October 3, 2012, with the Grand Opening of the new Education and Activity Center.

The 8,000-square-foot building, which is phase one of the Navajo Heritage Center project, includes new classroom space for the Navajo Ministries School, a small library, an activity and games area, a cafeteria and new central kitchen for the entire 16-acre campus.

Construction started in September 2009 – and thanks to numerous financial and in-kind supporters, Navajo Ministries was able to open the $1.3 million building about three years later.

“Some of us today were gathered right below the big cottonwood tree right outside this window as we broke ground on this new facility three years ago,” Navajo Ministries Vice President Eric Fisher told the crowd at the Grand Opening. “Today, that dream of opening this beautiful new building is now a reality.”

Scott Broten served as general contractor for the project, and former Navajo Ministries Vice President Bob Fitz was project manager. Navajo Ministries Board Vice Chairman George Trosky was the architect for this amazing new building.

Below are highlights from those who spoke at the Grand Opening celebration:

Janel Ryan, Superintendent, Farmington Municipal Schools:

“In this business of education, there’s only one reason why I get up every morning, work 10-11 hour days, get eight hours of sleep and get up and do it again. It’s all for the children. I think Farmington Schools has the same pride that Navajo Ministries has when we can give something good to children, and try to improve the facilities and comfort level that these kids work in every day. Together, we have accomplished a great thing.

“If you are hungry and no one feeds

(Continued on page 8)
The 8,000-square-foot Education and Activity Center at Navajo Ministries includes new classroom space for the Navajo Ministries School, a library, a games and activity area, a new central kitchen and cafeteria, and a conference room.

The center is phase one of the Navajo Heritage Center project (www.NavajoHeritageCenter.org). Subsequent phases include a museum-based experience that will be a true celebration of the Navajo people. The project will also include a trading post and marketplace area, bed-and-breakfast hogans, and more.

Navajo Ministries broke ground on the Education and Activity Center in September 2009. The building was completed at a cost of nearly $1.3 million, more than $600,000 below the original budget estimate. The center replaces a facility that is more than 50 years old.

The entire center serves as a lasting tribute to Breann Chavez, the granddaughter of Navajo Ministries President Jim Baker and Director of Partnership Ministry Kay Baker. Breann, who was the daughter of Jami and Lisa Chavez, passed away June 8, 2006 at age 3 after a courageous battle against Niemann-Pick Disease.

The classroom and library are dedicated in memory of Marshall Plummer, who passed away in March 2010. Marshall was the first Vice President of the Navajo Nation from 1991-1995 and was the Co-Chair of the Navajo Heritage Center Task Force from 2008-2010. He was a highly respected community leader and was the Governmental Relations Manager at APS-Four Corners Power Plant for nearly 15 years.

The colorful mural painted in the hallway of the center was created by Howard Harvey. The 16 hot air balloons in the mural represent major financial donors to the project. Breann is also a focal point of the mural.

The center houses the Navajo Ministries School, which includes students from first through fifth grades. The school started in 1999 in partnership with Farmington Municipal Schools and has provided services to more than 300 children. In addition to educating children who live here as part of the Four Corners Home for Children, the school has also provided services to Childhaven students since 2009.
you, you are cold and no one warms you, you need clothes and no one gives them to you, and need a place to learn and value yourself and it’s not there – then that child cannot become the leader of tomorrow. Farmington Schools has nothing but pride in being able to partner with Navajo Ministries for the good of children … We are so pleased to see this building completed.”

John Livingston, U.S. Marine who grew up at Navajo Ministries:
“I came here when I was really young and grew up here. Now I’m 20 years old. I also went to school here from first through fifth grade and I believe this place really helped me a lot. I don’t think I’d be where I am now, if it wasn’t for the mission and all the people here – the Bakers, the Terpsmas, my sister (current housemom Sonya Begay Rodriguez). I love my sister, Sonny. I love coming back … I still call it home.”

Pauline Plummer, Marshall Plummer’s widow and good friend of Navajo Ministries: (Marshall was Co-Chair of the Navajo Heritage Center Task Force prior to his death in March 2010).
“Losing Marshall in 2010 was very devastating. Both of our birthdays are February 25th, and he got sick that same day in 2010. He passed away on March 25th, and it was very fast and very shocking. But, through contact with Navajo Ministries and Arizona Public Service, I think those people saved me. They saved my children and my grandchildren. For Marshall’s family, it seemed just like a stop in the road. You all came to help and I thank you so much.”
“I’m so glad he had a part in this,
Navajo Neighbors

and that the library and classroom are named after him … Bless you all in doing this great work. As a social worker and on behalf of Navajo children, I know how hard it is to find a good place for these children. I love you all.”

Jim Baker, President, Navajo Ministries:

“Today is a celebration for our children. We have some former kids here today who are now adults. We’re glad we have been able to be a part of their lives all these years.

“The reason I’m talking today is because of the cute little girl holding a bunch of balloons on the mural in the hallway. This building is dedicated in her memory. Breann Chavez, our granddaughter, was born in 2003, and about a year and a half later we found out she had Niemann-Pick Disease. There are only 500 cases worldwide, and there is no cure. In three short years, she was gone. She never really walked or talked, and had to be carried or pushed by mom and dad in a wheelchair.

“But she lit up the room and brought joy to everyone who knew her. It’s our hope that the kids who come to this building will find that same kind of joy that Breann brought. Lisa and Jami Chavez, Breann’s parents, painted the walls of this building. They also have helped raise more than $100,000 for Niemann-Pick families throughout the nation … From our family and this ministry, thank you all for coming.”

A balloon release in Breann’s memory and honor capped off the Grand Opening celebration in front of the new Education and Activity Center. Everyone associated with Navajo Ministries truly appreciates all of those who helped make this special day possible. God Bless you all!

Completing the Dream

We are still raising the necessary funds to completely pay off the Education and Activity Center, along with needed equipment and other associated expenses. Many friends have already helped us by becoming “Complete the Dream” Club members at $1,000 over a three-year period. That means an annual gift of about $335, or $28 per month over 36 months.

By becoming a “Complete the Dream” Club member you’ll be helping us entirely pay off this building, equipment and all, within three years. As of late 2012 we had received more than 280 of these commitments!

If you can help, please see the enclosed envelope in the center of the magazine and check “Navajo Heritage Center Project.” You can also write “Complete the Dream” inside the envelope. We sincerely thank you for your consideration. We continue to realize that God is our Source, but friends like you, are His resources.
Bob, Brenda Juday a Blessing to Children

Editor's Note: Bob and Brenda Juday joined the staff of the Four Corners Home for Children in late summer 2012 as “interim” houseparents. They have done a wonderful job these past few months, and have quite a story to tell. In their own words, we’d like you to get to know Bob and Brenda, who are serving a home full of children in the House of Faith.

August 2012 was the start of an unforgettable journey for Bob and Brenda Juday – one they never expected.

Bob and Brenda met at Grace College, in Winona Lake, Indiana. After teaching for six years, God moved in both of their hearts to serve in missions. Both promised God they would serve Him the rest of their lives, but said in their hearts, “please don’t send us to Africa!” God then promptly sent them to the Central African Republic for six years, where Bob served as a teacher and administrator for missionary kids.

It seems that once God places “missions” into a person’s heart, he will always be a missionary wherever he is. That was true of Bob and Brenda. Mission life was hard for them, but the love for people of other cultures has always been an important force in their lives.

While in Africa, Bob got so sick that he went from 235 pounds to about 150 pounds in less than six weeks. It was also there that Brenda gave birth to their youngest daughter, who weighed in at less than four pounds in a primitive country! Both mom and daughter almost died, but God had other plans for them.

Bob and Brenda, along with their four children, moved back to the United States, where Bob became immersed in graduate school and received a “Degree in Missions.” It wasn’t long before they were on their way to Brazil with Wycliffe Translators, where he once again served as an administrator of a school for missionary children. The Brazilian government, after two years, forced all missionaries to leave the country. It was a disappointment, but God still had other plans.

After returning to America for a few years, God once again nudged their hearts toward missions. Asia was the last place in the world they wanted to go, but God had a perfect plan for their lives, and that meant the Philippines! For six years, they were instrumental in starting a Bible Institute and birthing a new church. What an exciting time it was for them. Among their first “converts” was a sweet little girl named Barbara Joy, who later became their daughter-in-law. God is so good!

After six years in the Philippines, they returned to the U.S., but God still had missions on their hearts. Bob led mission teams for Pinon Hills Church in Farmington to the Philippines and Uruguay.

Most recently, Bob and Brenda’s heart for missions brought them to the Four Corners Home for Children, where they are serving as “interim houseparents.” Bob and Brenda are both in their 70s and God is not through with them yet. Their love for God, children and missions has put them right where they belong at this stage in their lives.

Employment Opportunities:

We currently have a position 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 Kelly Hargrove at 505.324.5231 or KHargrove@NavajoMinistries.org
The first three months of school had a lot of ins and outs with students coming and going regularly. All together we have had 19 different students so far this year. By November, our class population settled at 10, and it has stayed there since. Ten seems to be a great size for this grouping of students as they are doing well.

By October, it was time to make our move to the new Education and Activity Center. We packed up books, math tools, learning games, computers, furniture, teaching supplies, art supplies, and so many other items. Yet, we still managed to keep learning the whole time. With the help of many wonderful people we moved down the hill to our new building. How exciting!

We love our new building. It is spacious, beautiful, quiet, and safe. We have enough restrooms for our class now without everyone having to share! We have a lovely library. There is even a special room just for our Navajo language lessons. There are too many great features to even begin to mention them all.

Our class loves being away from the busy highway because it is so much quieter for our learning. Of course, it is always fun to look out the window and see the peacock strutting through the schoolyard! We also have a cat that likes to climb in the window and watch us learn.

Now that we are settled in, we are all working hard. The students are maturing in their reading, writing and math. Soon we will start our science investigations and have our own little science fair again. Mrs. Pat Moone, the Navajo assistant teacher, is also helping the students learn the tradition of rug weaving while working on their language.

With everything going on, we never have a moment to get bored. We have much work ahead as we prepare for state testing and continue our work to learn the academic and social skills needed to have success. We are so grateful to have such a lovely place to continue working on these goals.

Tawnya Vollmert is the full-time teacher at the Navajo Ministries School.
The Four Corners region of Navajoland is rich in majestic mountains and unique high-desert rock formations. While driving along U.S. Highway 550 throughout northwest New Mexico, travelers often marvel at the Shiprock formation to the west, the La Plata Mountains to the north in Colorado—and the beautiful Angel Peak Scenic Area to the east.

Angel Peak, part of the Farmington Field Office of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, rises nearly 7,000 feet into the air, ushering in each morning with dramatic sunrises. The entire area offers more than 10,000 acres of rugged terrain and unforgettable landscapes.

Access to Angel Peak is not always easy, but there are three developed picnic areas within the boundaries of the area. Hiking, photography, wildlife viewing and camping are among the favorite activities of this hidden hideaway. The Angel Peak Campground also has nine sites available for tent camping.

At just the right time of day, spectators can clearly see the sandstone-capped mesas glistening in the sun, seemingly ready for liftoff. The name “Angel Peak” is never more fitting.

**Access to Angel Peak Scenic Area**

Access to the Angel Peak Scenic Area is off U.S. Highway 550, 15 miles south of Bloomfield, New Mexico on County Road 7175. Follow the gravel road along the canyon rim for about six miles to reach the campground, or stop at one of three developed picnic areas along the way to enjoy the view or have a bite to eat. However, the gravel road may become impassible in bad weather. Information: (800) 842-3127.
Navajo Ministries partners with about a dozen Navajo pastors each December to help deliver food, blankets, toys, Bibles and many more useful items to hundreds of needy families located in remote areas of the massive Navajo Nation.

Farmington-based Navajo Ministries serves as a collection point for donations that are received from throughout the country leading up to the annual Christmas Connections outreach effort. We again thank everyone who helped make a difference to more than 300 families during the special Christmas season. This annual event is always such a blessing to people who often have very little.

Joe and Gerri Begay, of Grace Fellowship Community Church in Chinle, Arizona, have been a part of Christmas Connections for years. Here is their report about the 2012 outreach to their Navajo neighbors:

“One of the busiest months for us is December doing Christmas visitations. Though it was bitter cold through muddy and snowy roads, we were able to give out gifts to some thankful families. There are so many poverty-stricken homes that it is a challenge to give to all.

“There are still so many without running water and electricity. Many of the homes are in poor condition and most were single-parent homes. This year we doubled the visitations to 50 and had some of our church members help us. It’s always a wonderful experience for us to see the young and old receive their gifts with great excitement and thankfulness. We are so grateful for all those who made it possible to give to these needy families.”

Pastor Joe and Gerri Begay
Grace Fellowship Community Church
Chinle, Arizona
Editor’s Note: Rachel Sitton, who spent several years growing up on the grounds at the Four Corners Home for Children in the 1990s, returned “home” last year as a co-host at KNMI Vertical Radio. Today, she is one of the hosts of the “The Morning Show” on FM 88.9. Rachel is the daughter of former houseparents Bill and Ann McKee. What follows are Rachel’s special memories of growing up at Navajo Ministries.

I don’t remember much before moving to “The Mission.” It’s where I call home, where I grew up. What is now known as the “The Bunk House” was My House. But the impression I left in the newly poured cement so many years ago, is nothing compared to the impression this place left on me.

My family and I moved from Louisiana to New Mexico in the fall of 1990. All of a sudden I was in a new place, with a house full of “new brothers and sisters.” One of the first things I remember thinking was how strange it was that these kids were calling my mother “Mom!” But, that quickly changed into “Wow! I get to live with all of my friends!”

My new sisters and I spent endless hours playing house, school, and beauty shop. We could turn the basement of our house into anything our imaginations wanted. I was recently able to go back into my old house. Either I’ve grown or that house has shrunk. Rooms that used to seem huge are now normal size. It’s funny how our perceptions change as we grow.

Summers were my favorite time at the mission. Most days were spent roller skating on the sidewalks between the houses or riding bikes in the dirt cul-de-sae. But one afternoon in particular was extra special. We got pavement! It doesn’t sound like much, but if you’ve ever roller skated on fresh pavement, it’s like flying. Well, at least to a bunch of kids it is.

Skating was a pretty popular hobby for most of us at the Mission. Once a month we looked forward to “Christian Skate Night.” It was a special night put on by KNMI, FM 88.9, the local Christian music station that we always listened to. It was an evening of games, junk food, prizes and Christian music. What I didn’t realize then was KNMI 88.9 was actually located where I lived. All I knew was there was this big building in front of the houses, called “The C Center” and we weren’t supposed to go without an adult. I didn’t know what went on in there, just that was where the grown ups went, and Mr. Baker (I still can’t call him “Jim”) had his office.

Fast-forward almost 20 years, and guess who’s a “grown up” working in that building. I was welcomed into the Vertical Radio Family early last spring as the co-host of the nightly rock show. A few months later, I became the new girl on “The Morning Show.” Knowing that I’m one of the people our listeners tune in to hear is a huge honor and responsibility.

Being back at “the Mission” is such a blessing. It amazes me that God has allowed me to be a part of such a wonderful ministry, and be a part of something that has changed our community and reached so many lives — including my own.
60 Years of Ministry to Children

It was 1953 when Jack Drake heard God’s call to begin a mission that would reach out to Navajo families, providing help to them in their time of need. Children were the heartbeat of Navajo Missions as the first home for children was begun. Children continue to be the heartbeat of Navajo Ministries today. For the past 15 years or so the childcare program has been known as the Four Corners Home for Children, reflecting the area where the majority of the youngsters come from that are in our program.

It was the children that brought Kay and me to Farmington in 1975. During our 12 years as houseparents we were able to welcome 35 children into our home. Some of these children came to us as little ones and graduated from high school during their stay in our home. Many other houseparents have served over the years, sharing God’s love with hundreds of His little ones. Today, we are praying for a new couple to join our houseparent team.

Each month it is our joy to share a list of friends who decided to provide a gift in memory of a departed loved one. Some folks give their gift in honor of a friend or family member who is still living. Today, Kay and I are providing a gift to Navajo Ministries in memory of Jack and Betty Drake. We are so thankful for their commitment to our Navajo neighbors as they served faithfully for many of the 60-year history of this ministry.

I’m thankful for those who provided gifts in the past few months that reflect memories and honors of their family and friends. A partial list is shown on this page. All of the Living Memorial gifts received are designated to the childcare ministry. If you would like to share a gift in this way, please fill out the envelope in the middle of this magazine. An attractive card will be sent to the family of the one being remembered or honored. No amounts are mentioned and all gifts are tax deductible.

Perhaps you would like to give a gift today in memory of Jack and Betty Drake, who provided leadership during the first half of this ministry. Thank you for your prayers and support for the children in our care.

Jim Baker, President
We are now on Facebook! Like NAVAJO MINISTRIES and stay up to date on what’s happening!

NAVAJOLAND
FALL TOUR  2013

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