ALSO SEE

Hogans: TRADITIONAL NAVAJO HOMES

The Road to Redemption

WIL & LINDA YAZZIE
Navajo Ministries broke ground on a new, 8,000-square-foot Education and Activity Center in September 2009. In more than two years, we have seen construction steadily progress as businesses, foundations, churches, individuals and other groups have helped provide more than $1 million in funding.

Once complete, the Education and Activity Center will include new classroom space for our On-Site School, a small library, a games and activity area, a central kitchen and cafeteria, and more. This wonderful new facility will replace the current building, which is more than 50 years old and located right next to a busy four-lane highway. The new center, which is phase one of the overall Navajo Heritage Center project, will be located just steps from the long-term children’s homes on grounds.

The exciting news today is that as of early May 2012, we need less than $100,000 in financial commitments to finish the job and get our students into the new building by the fall of this year. Will you help by joining the “Complete the Dream Club” as a $1,000 supporter over a three-year period? That means a gift of about $334 per year for three years, or $28 per month for 36 months.

We are so close … can you help us cross the finish line? Thank you so much for your consideration. We know God is our Source, but friends like you, are His resources.

To make a financial gift to this amazing project, please use the envelope located in the center of this magazine. Simply write “Complete the Dream” 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.
Dear Readers,

We know that God can, and often does, work wonders in our lives. Sometimes, when we look back through our own life experiences, we can see when God led us through some pretty tough times. We may even ask ourselves, “How did I survive that situation?” Somehow, someway, God had it under control, in His own time.

The cover story of Wil and Linda Yazzie’s incredible journey is a prime example of God working through some really bad things, only to make it all come together for good in the end. It’s a story of redemption and reconciliation, but most importantly it’s a story of love, and not giving up on someone. We hope you enjoy reading how God worked in Wil and Linda’s lives, and is still doing so today.

Other stories in the Summer 2012 issue of Navajo Neighbors include:

- Navajo Ministries President Jim Baker writes of the need to “Complete the Dream” of a new Education and Activity Center.
- The Four Corners Home for Children has welcomed new houseparents, Gator and Catherina Gaynor.
- A Navajo Culture page shares a story on the traditional Navajo home, the hogan.

And, there’s much more in the pages that follow. Thank you for reading this latest issue of Navajo Neighbors, and thank you for your prayers and support for the programs at Navajo Ministries.

God Bless,

Eric Fisher
Editor and Director of Development
These are exciting days in the life of Navajo Ministries. After several years of praying, planning and projecting we are within sight of seeing the Education and Activity Center become a reality. It’s hard to believe that 2 ½ years have passed since our exciting Ground Breaking Ceremony on September 10th of 2009.

In the midst of difficult economic times, God has continued to provide the funds to slowly keep the work moving forward. Now, we believe the time has come to complete the Education and Activity Center so the children can begin the new school year this coming August in the new facility. Our sub-contractors have told us that they will honor original construction bids - if we act now, before building costs rise.

At our recent Board of Directors meeting a plan was developed that can provide the necessary funds to “Complete the Dream.” We need a total of $300,000 to complete the dream. While businesses and foundations have provided many of our funds to date, we believe the time has come for individual friends of this ministry to participate in helping us to finish the 8,000-square-foot Education and Activity Center. This includes the classroom, library, game room, cafeteria and central kitchen.

That final $300,000 is really not so overwhelming if we break it down a bit. All we need is 300 people to make a commitment to give $1,000 over the next three years. That would be a gift of about $334 per year for three years or just $28 per month for 36 months. Some may want to give the entire $1,000 at one time.

The good news is that, as of late April, we have now received 213 of the 300 commitments that are needed! These dollars are either on hand or have been committed over the next three years. So, now we need just 87 additional friends who will commit to $1,000 over the next three years. Our board and staff members are making their commitments, along with other project supporters. Will you be able to join them?

Please use the enclosed envelope, indicating your commitment. Just write in “Complete the Dream” and we’ll apply it to the project. We know God is our Source, but friends like you are His resources.

James D. Baker, President
Annual Roast Brings in $17,000 for Children

The third annual “Celebrity” Roast, benefiting the Four Corners Home for Children at Navajo Ministries, proved to be another highly successful event on March 29 – raising more than $17,000 toward the operational expenses of the childcare program.

This year’s Roast honoree was Tom Dugan, a long-time community leader in San Juan County and President and CEO of Dugan Production Corp. in Farmington. A local oil and gas pioneer in the region, Tom has been a good friend to many in northwest New Mexico for more than five decades. About 400 people gathered at the Farmington Civic Center to pay tribute to Tom, and also take part in some good-natured fun.

“I’ve always liked children and I was able to visit with the school students at Navajo Ministries. I was very impressed with the children, and the programs there,” Tom told the large crowd on March 29.

In addition to his business and civic leadership, Tom is also a decorated World War II veteran, being awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart for his service to our country.

Thank you to everyone involved in this year’s Roast event, especially Tom Dugan.

Good Friday Event Part of New Mexico Centennial

An official New Mexico Centennial event in 2012, the annual Good Friday Prayer Breakfast hosted by Navajo Ministries was indeed a special occasion on April 6 at Farmington’s Red Lion Hotel.

A crowd of nearly 120 took time to recognize the sacrifice Jesus Christ made more than 2,000 years ago before His glorious Resurrection. The cast of Passion Play Ministries International also performed scenes from the Last Supper prior to serving communion to the crowd. The Passion Play, which has told the wonderful story of Jesus in 16 cities throughout eight countries, first began in Denver in 1985 and each year performs programs in multiple languages throughout the world.

In addition, Honduras Christian recording artist Dayana Antunez (pictured) performed three songs as part of the Holy Week breakfast event.

Arizona Public Service Gives Grant to Project

Arizona Public Service Company provided a $30,000 grant this spring toward construction of the Education and Activity Center at Navajo Ministries. The center, which is phase one of the overall Navajo Heritage Center project, is nearing completion and will provide new classroom space for the On-Site School, along with a small library, a games and activity area, and a new central kitchen and cafeteria.

The APS gift is designated to help finish the school portion of the building. The classroom and library area will be named in memory of Marshall Plummer, former co-chair of the Navajo Heritage Center Task Force and a long-time executive leader at APS-Four Corners Power Plant. He was also the first-ever Vice President of the Navajo Nation, serving from 1991-1995.

Navajo Ministries sincerely thanks APS for this amazing gift made in Marshall’s memory. For more information on the Navajo Heritage Center project, please go to www.NavajoHeritageCenter.org.
The Road to Redemption

WIL & LINDA YAZZIE

Wil and Linda Yazzie See God Restore Them After Years of Separation, Alcoholism

By Eric Fisher

Wil and Linda Yazzie have many favorite Bible verses, but none resonates more than Romans 8:28: 
**And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.** (NIV)

Today, that wonderful verse makes all the sense in the world when it comes to the amazing story of Wil and Linda Yazzie. Years earlier, though, it seemed very unlikely that this now happily married missionary couple would have any future together.

Nearly 30 years of separation and Wil’s decades-long dependency on alcohol were seemingly insurmountable roadblocks for the Yazzies, who were first married in 1978 when Wil was released from the New Mexico State Penitentiary. Their first contact? They became pen pals starting in 1974 when Wil responded to a letter in the Navajo Times newspaper.

A phrase now used to summarize their story reads: “A lot could go wrong when someone marries a pen pal from prison – but a lot could go right!” And, the Yazzies would admit that plenty did go wrong along the way. As they look back on their time together, and apart, they often return to Romans 8:28: God worked it all out – according to His purpose. Redemption and reconciliation are the rewards Wil and Linda cherish today as they serve as co-directors of Christ is the Answer Ministries in Newcomb, New Mexico.

Their story is now the subject of a book titled “Total Pardon,” written with Jodie Randisi and released on Valentine’s Day, 2012. A story like this deserves to be told from the start, where two people began their lives at the complete opposite sides of the world.

Thousands of Miles Apart

Linda Yazzie lived what she called an “extremely sheltered” life growing up in Cincinnati, Ohio. The daughter of devout Christians, Linda became a Christian at a young age. She also had serious health issues and spent the first 12 years of her life in bed. A bout of strep throat at age 4 eventually led to rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease.

“My parents were very protective of me, and I was not even expected to live,” Linda recalled. “One year, the doctor said if you’re going to get anything for Linda for Christmas, you better get it now because she’s not going to see another Christmas.”

News of Linda’s plight even reached national figures like First Lady Mamie Eisenhower, and Roy Rogers and Dale Evans.

“I got a letter from Mamie Eisenhower and later an autographed...
picture from Roy and Dale that said ‘Happy Birthday Linda Lou,’” Linda said. “I lived in a little imaginary world. I collected plastic horses and played with animals all the time. I loved to read and draw, and did artwork in church.”

She also began a fascination with the Old West, including cowboys, horses and American Indians. She wondered what it would be like to visit the West.

Linda recovered from her illnesses and finally started attending school in the seventh grade. She still remained a “shy, sheltered” girl who later started developing contacts throughout the world through pen pal writing. When she was a young adult, an ad reading “Christian woman seeks Navajo pen pal” in the Navajo Times would lead her to Wil Yazzie.

Wil was born in Phoenix to Navajo parents who were seasonal farm workers.

“I lived there and went to school in Phoenix. One day, my mom said we’re going back home to Shiprock. I had no idea that was home. From Shiprock, my dad then got a job in Cortez and we went to school there,” Wil said.

Wil, who was always a good young athlete, liked to perform powwow dances for his school friends – something that soon became a money-making venture.

“I’d charge them a nickel for a dance, and when I’d get 50 cents, I took off and went to the movies. The movies then were only 20 cents,” Wil said.

Wil always liked the escape of cinema. Little did he know then that he would one day become a professional character actor who would work with the likes of Jane Seymour, Steven Seagal and Lou Diamond Phillips, to name just a few.

Wil’s time in Cortez was short-lived, and he was soon enrolled in a BIA boarding school in Shiprock.

“The boarding school was a terrible experience. The first year I was there, my parents didn’t come to see me,” he said. “I was very lonesome … Everybody would go home, except me. I had to stay there during the holidays.”

Wil spent six years at the boarding school and was later taken in by his uncle after he was told his parents had gone through a divorce. He was enrolled in junior high in Shiprock, and it wasn’t long until he began stealing money. He took his first drink of alcohol at age 12, although Wil said he never “got drunk” until he was 15.

“I stole money all over the place, in Kirtland, Shiprock, Hogback. I got caught and was sent to the federal reformatory in Englewood, Colorado. I was there 10 months, but now I was worse. I learned a lot of (bad) stuff there,” Wil said.

Wil spent time in Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma – and was kicked out of school time and again. He got caught robbing a service station once, and alcohol was always part of his teen experience.

“I never passed on drinking. We’d go to town and bring liquor back,” he said.

One of many low points for Wil as a teen was living outside the Turquoise Bar in San Juan County, sleeping each night on an old, used mattress. He was just 17 years old.

“I just slept alongside the bar and drank every day. People would buy me sandwiches, and that’s how I survived,” he said.

Once he turned 18, Wil attempted to join the service during the Vietnam War, but was denied because of his police record. During the late 1960s and early 1970s Wil often lived the life of a “hobo or tramp.” He did spend a while working in a candy factory in Oklahoma City, but the desire to drink was always present.

Then, in 1971, Wil Yazzie was sent to the New Mexico State Penitentiary in Santa Fe for being an accessory to a burglary. “I had no idea what he was doing and I walked away from the burglary. But, because I saw him do it, they gave me one to five years in prison.”

Two years into his sentence, Wil said he escaped from prison in Santa Fe and stole a horse to make his getaway. He also had a knack for escaping from local jails, but he always got caught and wound up back behind bars.

Pen Pals

Bored and looking for something to do, Wil noticed a small ad in the Navajo Times on a September day in 1974. It was from Linda. He wrote a short return letter, “not caring if she wrote back to me or not.”

At 26, Linda decided she wanted a Navajo pen pal.
would say I got 75 to 100 letters, all from men – and mainly men in prison,” she said.

Naturally, Linda’s mother was concerned, but Linda saw it as an opportunity. Wil’s letter was the one that really stood out, and she immediately wrote back to him.

“I felt right away that God had a plan for Wil. He was different. He explained what he had done, and he was honest. And, I was very evangelistic, saying he needed to accept Jesus as his Lord and Savior,” Linda said.

Wil and Linda shared many more letters and photos throughout 1974 and 1975, and expressed their love for each other on Valentine’s Day in 1975.

Once Wil was paroled from prison in 1976, they decided they would be married in Cincinnati. However, Wil never made it to Ohio after being caught with a gun.

Despite her mother’s objections, Linda waited for Wil until his next parole date in 1978. They even met face to face for the first time in 1977.

“I just could not give up on him,” she recalled.

Wil and Linda were finally married on September 1, 1978, but Wil said he was a Christian “only in his head.”

“I was just trying to please Linda,” he said.

Wil initially tried to become a pastor, but was denied by a ministry school. He then enrolled in classes at the University of Cincinnati, while Linda worked as a library aide. Now out of prison, the temptation to return to alcohol proved to be too strong. One night Wil came home with the odor of alcohol, but he told Linda it was aftershave.

“I told him to never wear that again. I just didn’t know any better,” she said.

Wil never drank in front of Linda, but he also realized he didn’t want to hurt her. He would check into a rehab center at times, but always returned to alcohol. In 1980, he left for good, returning to New Mexico.

“I didn’t want to put her through all that stuff I was doing to her. I thought she was better off without me,” Wil said.

After Wil disappeared, and with no contact from him for months, Linda filed for divorce.

The Years Apart
Returning to the Four Corners region from Cincinnati, the 1980s were truly lost years for Wil Yazzie. He was often drunk, in trouble with the law or in rehab. He consumed anything with alcohol in it, including hairspray, mouthwash and Lysol. Many of his street gang friends also wound up dead, mainly due to their alcoholism.

Somehow, through all of these troubling years, God protected Wil, as He had so many times before. A judge and prosecutors in Cortez were so tired of seeing Wil in and out of the system that they bought him a one-way bus ticket to Los Angeles.

While Wil immediately began to drink in southern California, he eventually was able to finish a social work degree and helped start programs for American Indians who were involved in gangs, drugs and other issues. Later, he met a woman who he married, only to divorce after another return to alcohol.

Wil, who is a member of the Screen Actors Guild, became a working actor in 1993 after Jane Seymour, then the star of the CBS television series “Doctor Quinn Medicine Woman,” helped introduce him to key movie people. His first film role was as a band drummer in the Lou Diamond Phillips movie “Sioux City.”

Next, he appeared in the film “On Deadly Ground,” starring Steven Seagal. Still a working actor today, Wil has appeared in 12 feature films and three TV series. He is especially proud of his Navajo voice-over work in the 2002 movie “Windtalkers,” which starred Nicolas Cage and Adam Beach, and focused on the role the Navajo Code Talkers played in defeating the Japanese in World War II.

In the mid-90s he even signed a lucrative deal with the U.S. Postal Service for a TV commercial that ran for two years. Linda, not knowing what had happened to Wil, saw him on TV in the ad from her home in Ohio.

“I told my mom when we saw the commercial that I thought that looked like Wilford. She said, ‘why would he be in a TV commercial?’ But, it really was him,” Linda said.
During their 28 years apart, Linda said she never dated anyone else. She became a minister in 1999 and served as caretaker to her sister and mother, who passed away in 1994 and 2008. She never stopped loving Wil, though.

While Wil had enjoyed success as a social worker and actor, his alcoholism always got the best of him. He moved back to the Navajo Nation in 1998 to help take care of his ailing father. He continued to drink for seven more years, until he finally, truly turned to God for help.

“I prayed and prayed every day. I didn’t want to drink anymore, and God knew my heart. I accepted His forgiveness and became a Christian for the first time in my life. I also stopped drinking right then and there,” Wil said. “I had been to rehab 24 times throughout my life, but God healed me. I’ve now been sober for seven years.”

A Miraculous Reunion

Linda’s sister came across Wil’s MySpace Internet page, and the two began communicating. Wil asked about Linda and wanted to know if he could talk to her.

“I wanted to apologize to Linda for what had happened. I wanted her forgiveness,” Wil said.

“Wil wrote me a very nice letter and was very apologetic,” Linda said. “I wrote back that I forgave him years ago. As a Christian, you need to become a better person, not a bitter person. We then began calling each other and writing each other. He then asked what I thought about getting married.”

Linda said she was initially unsure about getting back together, but after plenty of prayer, she said “yes.”

“I felt strongly that Wil had become a Christian and that God had a plan for Wil, and a ministry for him,” she said.

They were remarried in Cincinnati on Thanksgiving Day, 2008. Following marriage, Wil and Linda established Christ is the Answer Ministries, and relocated the ministry to the Navajo Nation in June 2010.

“I told Wil that I thought the Lord was calling us back to reservation ministry. We had talked about that before we got married. God had preserved Wil’s life so many times, and he had such a testimony to share.”

“I told Linda she didn’t know about life back here, and I told her it would be hard,” Wil said. “It’s a different culture, a different land. I prayed about it, though, and the next day I said ‘let’s do it!’”

Wil and Linda moved to his father’s home site lease property in Newcomb and got a great deal on a mobile home from a business in Gallup. While at first they started the ministry in Shiprock, about a half-hour away, they soon developed a friendship with Pastor Duane Hammond, and his wife Faye, at the Newcomb Assembly of God Church – just a half-mile away.

“The Assembly of God Church is right across the street, and Duane and Faye have been so supportive. This is now where we have our Christ is the Answer Ministries meetings each Tuesday night,” Linda said.

“We average anywhere between six and 15 people, who come from all sorts of backgrounds of abuse and addiction. They’ve come from Chinle, Arizona, Gallup, Shiprock and the Newcomb area. We’ve seen a lot of good progress using principles from the Bible and our own story,” Wil said.

They are using proceeds from the “Total Pardon” book to help fund the ministry.

“No matter how far a person sinks, there is still hope,” Linda added. “That is Wil’s story. To God be the glory.”

Wil is also studying to become a pastor through Global University. He hopes to obtain his degree later this year.

“This is one of the exciting parts of pastor to me,” Pastor Hammond said of Wil and Linda. “It’s seeing people come to the Lord, develop and grow … Wow. It’s amazing what God has done in their lives. They’ve been a blessing to us.”

Wil used to always get angry when people would say the name “Jesus.” Today, Jesus is all he wants to talk about.

“I’m so happy today,” he said. “I always look forward to coming to church. One day, I was just crying in church, looking up and thinking I’d rather be here than anywhere else in the world. I was the worst of the worst, but Jesus has transformed me.”

Wil and Linda Yazzie can be contacted at wilandlindayazzie@yahoo.com, or (505) 696-3209.

Wil and Linda Yazzie’s amazing story is now available in a book titled “Total Pardon: An Extraordinary Love Story,” written with Jodie Randisi.


The Yazzies are using proceeds from the book to help fund their Christ is the Answer Ministries program in Newcomb, New Mexico.
Our journey to the Four Corners Home for Children definitely has the handprint of God on it. In the last couple of years, we have witnessed God’s direction in our lives as we grew closer together and closer to our new home here in Farmington. The journey together began when we met in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in January 2010.

From the beginning we made it clear to each other that we wanted to be helping people; not just financially, but doing the actual work. Shortly after we were married, we went on a mission trip to England in June 2010, where we were able to use our talents to reach out to a few communities in southwest England. That 10-day trip ignited a new fire in us to help people even more.

Last June, we moved to Tennessee for Gator’s job but, after a couple of months, the job didn’t pan out as originally planned and Catherina’s cake decorating job was not quite what she was looking for. We both sought the Lord and made a declaration to Him saying, “Lord, we want to be working somewhere, anywhere, where we can help people and show Your love to them. We want to be able to focus solely on helping people and not have to worry about getting a side job to pay the bills.”

God answered that declaration by utilizing a connection with KNMI Vertical Radio at Navajo Ministries in Farmington. Gator had been promoting songs that Vertical Radio had been playing and through a chance music decision by the fill-in music director, Devin Neeley (his normal hat is General Manager), a discussion began regarding the station’s need for a Music Director. With the declaration in mind, the conversation turned to the Four Corners Home for Children’s need for houseparents. God’s answer about where we were to go became extremely clear.

We visited Navajo Ministries last December and then moved here in February. It’s been an amazing time adjusting to this new life and we love working with the kids and helping them know what it’s like to have a Godly and sound family. We also love that there is a small farm with animals on site!

Navajo Ministries is pleased to welcome Gator and Catherina Gaynor as our new houseparents at the Four Corners Home for Children.

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
ON-SITE SCHOOL

Students Show Progress, Look Forward to New Building

By Tawnya Vollmert

The school year at Navajo Ministries is in its final days of a very busy year – my first as teacher at the On-Site School. It’s been a great first year for me, and the students have all made solid growth in their learning. The school has served 11 students during the 2011-2012 year, and more than 300 since 1999.

We are all looking forward to next fall, when we hope to be able to move into the new Education and Activity Center, now in its final stages of construction. It will be so nice to be away from the busy, four-lane highway, where we are located now, and in a new facility near the long-term children’s homes. The students all get excited when they see construction workers busy at the new building.

In reading, we have worked to develop word recognition skills, comprehension skills, and to improve our overall fluency. Right now, many students are reading about animals to support our learning in science. The fifth-graders are also reading about American history and using their reading to learn more about our country’s foundations.

We haven’t completed our final testing yet, but everyone has shown growth. At mid-year it was exciting to see some students had already shown more than one year’s growth in half a year. We also look forward to having a library space in our new building. We hope to add a wide range of elementary-level nonfiction books to our library to go with our great collection of fiction.

In math, we have worked really hard. The first and second graders have been exploring the foundations of multiplication and division. They have also been learning about money, telling time, and developing proficiency with computation. The older students have come a long way in their understanding of fractions, multiplication and division of larger numbers, and working with variables and equations. It is exciting to see their confidence and proficiency grow and improve.

The students are also developing as writers, problem solvers, and thinkers in many other subjects. We all have a great time with science. Everyone in the class did a science project and presented them at our Science Fair in January. It was a great learning experience to see how the scientific process works. We have been studying electricity and students enjoyed constructing their own simple and series circuits.

We appreciate everyone’s support and prayers for the school program at Navajo Ministries. The students are wonderful and continue to show consistent improvements.

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Tawnya Vollmert is the full-time teacher at the ConocoPhillips Program at the Navajo Ministries School.

Destiny explains her Science Fair project to Kay Baker.
When relationships run into trouble, we hear a lot about reconciliation and restoration (R&R). When dealing with faltering relationships, we should ask a few questions:

• Is it possible to reconcile and restore the relationship under the circumstances? Has “too much water gone under the bridge?” Or, in other words, has too much hurt been sustained for the R&R process to even be attempted. Couples ask that question when lying/deceit, trauma, abuse or loss has touched their lives, their marriage, or their family.

• Is it safe to try to commence the R&R process? Has there been physical abuse or significant verbal/emotional abuse perpetrated upon a family member to make it “unsafe” for the victim to be in close proximity to the abuser? Only the individuals involved, perhaps with a third party (counselor or pastor), can answer this question.

• If either or both of the above events have been experienced, usually a geographical separation is implemented. If this has occurred, are both persons involved in the tattered relationship willing to become involved in individual counseling/therapy, to work on their own weaknesses or character flaws? The best time to work on one’s self is during this separation period.

Reconciliation

Once these questions are answered and dealt with, the first step in reconciliation is to deal with forgiveness. Humbling oneself and admitting one’s wrong/sin against the other is an absolute must before the relationship can be healed. Something similar to the following will make a great “giant step” toward making things right: “You know, I messed up. I’m sorry I hurt you. I’ll try to never hurt you like that again. Will you please forgive me?”

Restoration

Once both parties can acknowledge their individual parts in tarnishing the quality of the relationship and deal with forgiveness, then the process of restoration can begin.

• Start by putting together a goal, a plan and a timetable in order to implement the restoration process.

• All individuals have to commit to follow through on the agreed upon goal and plan as well as accept outside accountability during the restoration process. Many attempts fail at this stage because a well-thought-out process is not in place. Couples often attempt the restoration process too quickly, and move back in together before forgiveness takes place, or before wounds are healed.

While all things are possible with God, not all people are willing to do the work required for reconciliation and restoration. We must seek long-term results, not quick fixes. ☃

Bill and Linda Eubank are licensed professional clinical counselors at The Counseling Center at Navajo Ministries.

By Bill and Linda Eubank

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Hogan Serves as Traditional Navajo Home

They can be seen throughout Navajoland, perched near the massive plateaus and all along the majestic desert landscapes of this beautiful part of the country. These structures made of earth and wood are called hogans – the traditional Navajo home.

A hogan is generally round and cone shaped, with six to eight sides and an entrance that always faces to the east to welcome the rising sun and good blessings each day brings. While there are “male” and “female” versions of a hogan, the circular “female” hogan has served as the family home to the Navajo people for generations.

Today, with the rise of more modern housing, many Navajo no longer live in hogans. However, a large number of home sites in the Navajo Nation have hogans nearby that are used for ceremonial purposes. For many Navajo people, the hogan represents a source of life’s blessings and serves as the traditional setting for major life moments, such as births and weddings.

While the hogan as a home has little room for possessions, the Navajo throughout history have made the most of the confined space, developing strong family bonds in a structure that is widely considered a pioneer in energy efficiency. Using packed mud against the entire wood structure, the home is kept cool in the summer months by natural air movements and moisture during rain storms. In the winter, the central fireplace keeps the inside warm for long periods of time.

For many of today’s Navajo people, the hogan is a place of deep, lasting memories. They remember the aroma of coffee and frybread early in the morning, or how a grandmother measured time by watching the stars over the smokehole at night. The hogan is indeed a unique place that represents so much to the great Navajo people. It is “home.”
Station Welcomes New Team Members

By Devin Neeley

Change is a constant in many facets of life, and that truth is very apparent at KNMI Vertical Radio as our staff continues to welcome some new faces to the team.

After six years on the air, we said goodbye to our long-time Lunch Crunch host Wendy Curtin. She has made a transition to work for another local non-profit organization, Animas Pregnancy Center, and left some big shoes to be filled. However, we found a terrific new host for the popular show - Leah Stovall.

Leah is from Clovis, New Mexico and has been married to her husband Cody for 13 years. They have three boys and Leah also serves alongside Cody in youth ministry at The Oasis Church in Farmington. Leah brings a very unique flavor to the air and, with plenty of energy, she fits well on our team.

Since October 2011, Vertical Radio had been without a Music Director. In the time that I spent handling music duties, I had the pleasure of making a few mistakes and, as our Lord works in mysterious ways, one fateful mistake actually brought us a new Music Director and two new houseparents (read more about them on page 10).

My first interaction with Gator Gaynor was to apologize for my “rookie mistake” and how we were in need of someone who knew what they were doing. After phone and in-person interviews, Gator is now on board as our new Program and Music Director. His wife, Catherina, also joined him here in February to serve as houseparents at the Four Corners Home for Children.

Gator comes from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, by way of Nashville, Tennessee. He has worked in radio since 1988 as a DJ, Program Director, Music Director and independent promoter of music. The experience he brings to the table is invaluable, and he’s already helping to make the station even better.

For the last few years Vertical Radio has aired the only Christian rock show in the Four Corners. We have just installed a brand new team on the air from 8 p.m. to midnight on “The Current.”

Michael Justice and Rachel Sitton are taking over the late night duties for Vertical Radio. Michael, a native of Kentucky, is in youth ministry, serving at Word of Life Church in Farmington. He and wife Desiree have three children.

Rachel is from Farmington and is married to husband Michael. She has wanted to work in radio for quite some time, and this turned out to be a great opportunity. Rachel is very active in the First United Methodist Church in Farmington.

We’re very pleased to have these four new additions working at KNMI, where we continue to impact this world for Jesus Christ, through quality radio.

Devin Neeley is the General Manager of KNMI Vertical Radio.
A Lasting **Tribute**

It’s a special time to remember the sacrifice that was paid by our fellow Americans who gave their lives in the service of our country. Memorial Day is so much more than a day off from work, a family picnic or a big race in Indianapolis. It is a time to reflect on the many brave soldiers who made it possible for us to enjoy the freedoms that we often take for granted.

We are so thankful for our many friends across the country who provide donations in memory of a departed loved one. So many have served in our military, but many of those remembered are family members or friends who lived a life serving God by loving their fellow man.

Some folks provide a gift in honor of a friend or relative who is still living. Upon receiving your gift, you will get a tax-deductible receipt. The designated family member will receive a lovely card recognizing your gift. No amounts are mentioned. Please use the envelope attached to this magazine and fill in the appropriate information.

All memorial gifts received will be applied to the care of the children living at Navajo Ministries.

The older children are always excited to have the opportunity to raise and lower the flag each day in honor of our great country. In reality, these youngsters are our “First Americans.”

We are blessed to have your partnership in our Living Memorial program.

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