

The Campaign for the Advancement of the Navajo(CAN):

The Case for Giving

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The Navajo Nation spreads out throughout Northern Arizona and New Mexico and Southern Utah. Here is the United States' largest Indian Reservation, roughly the size of the State of West Virginia. The Navajo Nation has 168,000 residents living within its borders. The Navajo Nation is a wondrously magical and mystical land: Rugged terrain, high mountains, high deserts, windswept mesas, red rock cliffs, majestic buttes, inspiring eroded statues of stone, deep canyons, breath-taking views everywhere, special places, ancient ruins, woods and lakes, desolate communities, gravel roads, great beauty, splendid sights, a land steeped in Tradition and places of wonder for reflection. Here is Canyon de Chelly, Monument valleys, Shiprock Peak, the Hogback, the Chuska Mountains-all within the Four Sacred Mountains.

The Navajo people are intelligent, beautiful, hard-working, family loving, have great sense of humors, great conversationalists, Traditional and Christian, great leaders, warm friends, and a joy to be around.

The Navajo People are: Grandmas in long dresses, turquoise jewelry, rug weaving enduring People, rodeos, sand paintings, Medicine Man Ceremonies, healings, sculpture, paintings, technology craving, Fair-going, politics loving, clan relationships, sharing, caring, tough living, happy dancing, grandma's children, inspiring talkers, and sports active. Discover the Navajo at the parades and fairs each Fall at Chinle, Crownpoint, Shiprock, Tuba City, and Window Rock the main event the first weekend after Labor Day each September. Discovering the Navajo is to enrich one's life to a new level.



Racism

The Navajo are surrounded by border communities which derive their living from the Navajo. Each weekend, the Navajo spend from \$32-36 million or more than \$1.5 billion per year. In return, these communities provide goods but the cities keep 99% of all the positions of power, prestige, and privilege for Anglos in both the cities, businesses, and in the public school systems they control. Navajo live in segregated neighborhoods, are employed, if at all, in low power, low prestige, low privilege positions are almost nonexistent as public school teachers and administrators, are discriminated against in housing, employment, educational opportunity, voting patterns, tracked into special education and vocational education in schools, denied fair treatment by store clerks, teachers, administrators, personnel officers, bank loan officers, across all levels in every border community. The most segregated hour in the border communities is Sunday morning at 11:00am at any Christian or Catholic Church. Navajo attendance at Catholic CCD classes is almost nonexistent in the border communities, yet many Navajo are Catholic. This racism, discrimination, and segregation against the Navajo has resulted in many social problems both in the border communities and on the Navajo Nation. While alcohol and drug abuse is the most obvious problem in the border communities, the conditions in these communities result in even more serious problems on the Navajo Nation. The Border communities are oasis of light and economic prosperity surrounded by a land of great poverty from which their wealth is derived.

Social Problems : Navajo Nation

Unemployment here is roughly 56.1%, poverty rate about 57%, homes without running water and indoor plumbing 48%, homes without electricity and refrigeration 44%, children living in poverty 68%, students graduating high schools 50%, students graduating college 2%, children attending summer camps 1%, Navajo children attending schools with Navajo teachers and Navajo administrators 1%, homes with telephones 20%, unpaved roads 90%, central heat 20%, wood burning stoves for cooking and heating 70%- but statistics do not tell the real story. Let us introduce you to a story behind these statistics. A story found behind 68% of all Navajo children.

Joshua Chee, age 11, Navajo boy

Joshua is one of nine children living in an isolated part of the Navajo Nation near Newcomb, New Mexico. He is the oldest child and has been taking care of his younger siblings since he was five. He lives with his mom and siblings in the family Hogan, on a beautiful mesa, with a view of the mystical desert and rugged terrain in the area.

Joshua wakes up each morning at 4:00am and relights the family stove so the Hogan will be warm when the other children wake up. He sleeps with all his siblings on a large mattress which lies near the wood burning stove which is used for both cooking and heating and even some light. He like his seven brothers and one sister, sleeps in his clothes. He bathes, changes clothes, studies, plays, and does his daily chores in this one room Hogan, lacking any privacy for his changing body. At 6:00am, Joshua wakes up the family while his mom dresses the little ones. There is no refrigeration and school provides a free breakfast and lunch where the children can receive cold milk and a balanced meal. When rising, Joshua notices that his mom has already lit the two hurricane lamps which provide minimal lighting in the Hogan. The one window is dark and the day is wintry outside. The children all bathe and head out the door to the bus, with Joshua leading them on their one mile hike across rough terrain to the road.

Joshua is in the sixth grade and is interested in science and math. He loves space and dreams that one day he will be an astronaut and be the first human being to step onto the planet Mars. Although he works at school, he notices that his Anglo teacher washes her hands each time she touches one of her Navajo students. She is mean and mean-spirited. She doesn't see Joshua's intelligence, his handsome good looks, his humor, his effort, or his persistence. Joshua is often ignored when he raises his hand and usually does not let it bother him.

Joshua and his siblings arrive home after school. There are few toys in the Hogan and all of their games are imaginary and require few tools. He and his two twin brothers, Jeremiah and Jeremy, age 10, herd the sheep until it gets dark. Joshua returns home with his brothers at sunset and helps his mom prepare dinner which tonight is spaghetti and cold water. He eats on paper plates since water is scarce and must be trucked in each week. He uses about three gallons per day, while his Anglo counterpart in a border community uses about 205 gallons of water per day. Joshua and his siblings are 75% more likely to get disease and sickness because of the unpurified water than his city counterparts. Joshua's family has no vehicle and a local church assists

the family in emergencies. The Navajo Transit Authority also offers bus rides to the Public Health Hospital in Shiprock, about 30 miles up the highway.

After dinner, Joshua and his family will watch one hour of blurred television operated from a car battery. The children will play and then retire early. They sleep in their clothes huddled against each other to protect them from the winter cold. 11 year old Joshua has put in a long day. He lies down between his two twin brothers, says goodnight to everyone, and falls instantly into a deep sleep...dreaming of a day in the future when he will step out of a futuristic spacecraft and say, "Another small step for a man...Another giant step for mankind."

Making the Dream Come True

Share Your Dream with Joshua

Joshua Chee lives like thousands and thousands of other Navajo children:

In a one-room Hogan, no family breadwinner, single parent home, no electricity, no refrigeration, no running water or indoor plumbing, no telephones for emergencies, no computers, and a battery operated TV for an hour per day, if at all. The family survives on mutton from the sheep flock during hard times, which is a ever-present condition.