



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

June 19, 2017

Con Alma Health Foundation
144 Park Avenue
Santa Fe, NM 87501

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to confirm our support of the collaborative effort by The Santa Fe-based non-profit The Storydancer Project, and Kelly Dinéyazhe-Hunter of UNM-Gallup's Early Childhood & Family Center to bring their innovative pilot program "Strengthening Hearts & Minds" for Navajo mothers to the New Mexico Navajo Nation.

The Storydancer Project (TSP) has a history of working in NM Navajo Nation elementary schools, libraries, and early childhood programs since 2014 with the Navajo-facilitated, "What's in a Story," program of exercises, stories and language, including Diné-Bizaad vocabulary. The programs are met with enthusiasm by students and teachers, and are consistently evaluated to be culturally appropriate, engaging and empowering for students. TSP has also worked in several departments of Gallup Indian Medical Center and at Tohatchi Health Care Center to facilitate self-care exercise sessions with staff members, and is consistently invited back because of the obvious positive effects of the sessions on staff members' stress levels, mood and outlook.

Kelly Dinéyazhe-Hunter is a well-respected educator and community leader, with a track record of initiating innovative ideas in service of area families in her role as Site Director of UNM-Gallup's EFCF. As a tribal leader, I have full confidence in her ability to co-direct the "Strengthening Hearts & Minds" program for Navajo mothers in the region. The inclusion of Sheila Goldtooth, of Canyon de Chelly, as a co-facilitator in the program also garners our full support, as she is a revered medicine woman, counselor and educator with multiple talents and skills to offer Navajo mothers struggling with depression and isolation.

In closing, as representatives of the Navajo Nation affected by the pilot program, we wholeheartedly recommend the program for funding by the Con Alma Health Foundation. We look forward to learning more about the program and wish it every success in supporting Navajo Nation mothers in San Juan and McKinley counties.

THE NAVAJO NATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan M. Nez".

Jonathan M. Nez, Vice President