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## VICE PRESIDENT NEZ CLOCKS MILES IN SUPPORT OF RED RIBBON WEEK



Participants of the Red Ribbon Run stand together for a group shot with Vice President Jonathan Nez.



Vice President Nez joined the run at Mexican Water and finished at Red Mesa.



After completing the run, Vice President Nez said it was a honor to run with everyone.

RED MESA-The Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project coordinated with Health promotions from Four Corners Regional Health Center in organizing a Red Ribbon Run starting in Kayenta, Ariz. and ending in Red Mesa, N.M.

Brian Parrish from the Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project said the associated programs have organized the run for the past four years to raise awareness on drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence. Every year the run switches starting points and destinations, either beginning or ending in Kayenta or Red Mesa.

Nationally, Red Ribbon Week addresses substance abuse and violence prevention through awareness campaigns observed annually in October.

Vice President Jonathan Nez showed his support of Red Ribbon Week by participating in the run as he joined at Mexican Water and finished in Red Mesa. Vice President Nez clocked in a full 14.6 miles.

"This run is in support of Red Ribbon Week," he said. "We want to reinforce the message of saying no to alcohol and drugs. We want to bring awareness to substance abuse and its

crippling effects on the community."

Parrish said the run is a healthy way to get kids involved while raising awareness. Every runner put down miles with the intention of battling substance abuse while preventing violence on the Navajo Nation.

The 57 miles course was run relay style. The lead runner carried a prayer stick and handed it off as the next runner would take over. Participants ranged from elementary school children and hospital service staff to leaders of the Navajo Nation.

"We want to empower our citizens, our Navajo people and especially our youth. The youth these days are around substance abuse," said Vice President Nez. "They see it all the time and they think it's normal. It's not. We need to reinforce the message in our children that substance abuse is not normal."

Vice President Nez addressed the fact that elders and youth are a critical pillar on which the Begaye-Nez administration stands. Because of which, he told the participants that now is the time to plant a seed of healthy living, active lifestyles and resistance to substance abuse.

"If we instill this in our young people, they are less likely to become substance abusers. We need to plant these seeds in our youth," he said. "We may see fruition in our lives but either way, we need to work toward instilling this in the youth for a greater Navajo Nation. In turn, they will live healthier lives. They will know spiritual wellness, active lifestyles and healthy diet."

On behalf of both himself and President Russell Begaye, Vice President Nez thanked each and every person who participated in the run.

"I appreciate the opportunity of being able to run with each and every one of you. Thank you Kayenta Special Diabetes Program, Health Promotions from Four Corners Regional Health Center and all the service staff of health centers across the Nation."