

'Together we walk in beauty' Hózhóní Native American youth center dedicated

By Pat McCaughan

When he invited local public officials to attend the Feb. 20 dedication of the Hózhóní Youth Center in Holbrook in the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona, Garrick Logg didn't really expect them to show up.

During the grand opening celebration, the 19-year-old received the surprise of his young life.

"A lot of them came up to me and shook my hand and said they were proud of me. I was honored for them to say they were proud of me and that this was a big accomplishment."

As a volunteer associate director, Logg leads worship services, and tutors and mentors younger youth at the center. "The name Hózhóní comes from a Navajo word that means 'Together We Walk in Beauty,'" he says.

"Our youth center is unique in that it's youth helping the youth. Specifically, it's Native American youth helping the Native American youth," he added. "Several people [at the dedication] said it was truly powerful that children are finally taking action to do something to help the community."

The center, located in the parish hall at St. George's Episcopal Church in Holbrook, grew out of the Spirit Journey Youth ministry, begun nine years ago by volunteer Kaze Gadway, a former community developer. "Their mission was to help the homeless," said Gadway. "Now it's expanded to help youth."

"On the opening of Hózhóní, we want to impress the small town of Holbrook that Native American youth are giving of their time to operate the Hózhóní Youth Center as their service to the community," says Sarah Eagle Heart, Native American and indigenous ministries officer and team leader for the Episcopal Church

'The Episcopal Church is their family'

Gadway said she volunteered to begin the youth ministry not long after moving to Holbrook nine years ago. The town, with a population of about 5,000, is located about 226 miles northeast of Phoenix in Arizona's high plateau country, near the Navajo and Hopi reservations.

Gadway began with about five youth but the program quickly



Garrick Logg (right) explains the Hózhóní Youth Center to guests, including Sarah Eagle Heart (third from left), Native American and indigenous ministries officer and team leader for the Episcopal Church.

Photo/Courtesy Kaze Gadway

grew. They "are a phenomenal group, growing in leadership and faith," she said. "They are faithful members of the Episcopal Church and consider it their family. I hear priests complaining they can't get new people in the church. I can't keep them out."

The drop-in center offers homework help, tutoring, mentoring and recreational activities. It is equipped with computers, video and camera equipment, televisions and a variety of musical instruments, including an organ, electric piano, guitars, and drums, as well as video game systems, football and pool tables — much of it donated after a diocesan youth ministry officer sent out a request on the Facebook social networking website.

A new generation of leadership

It doesn't matter how many or how few show up, Logg said. "The way I think about it is, if we have 15 kids here, that's 15 kids who are not going to get locked up or use drugs or alcohol. I'm just happy with what we're doing, with what we're going to accomplish in the future."

Both Logg and Gadway said the youth worked diligently, painting and preparing the center for the Feb. 20 grand opening.

Gadway said, "This generation is taking over the leadership of our Spirit Journey Youth. They don't have an education yet, they don't have all the leadership qualities they need but we are hoping ... they will be empowered to be leaders of the Episcopal Church. They are such wonderful kids. The church is their family."

The Rev. Pat McCaughan is a national correspondent for Episcopal News Service. A longer version of this article appeared on Episcopal Life Online, www.episcopalchurch.org/ens.

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