



Echohawk Lefthand Is Our New Director



Echohawk Lefthand gives Ellsbury tee-shirt to award winner at Writers Workshop (Darlene Begay in the background).

On May 13, 2009, a Writers Workshop was held for young students at the Red Mesa (Arizona) Elementary School. Awards were bestowed on winners of the poetry contest by an athletic young Navajo. As he handed out to the winners both books and Ellsbury t-shirts, he also gave each a big smile.

The awards distributor was Echohawk Lefthand, our new Director of ThinkFirst Navajo and Program Director for Eve's Fund. After three months on board, Echo has already shown great energy in his work and a warm personality that makes him popular with students and staff.

Echo comes to us with a wide range of capabilities. He served in the Marine Corps as an aviation electronics technician and then studied engineering at Arizona State University. As President of the ASU Chapter of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, he created the Rez Tour, a successful organization that helps Indians enter and stay in college. After college, he sold medical equipment and later taught physical education on the Navajo Nation.

Since summer of 2008, Echo has worked closely with Darlene Begay, Coordinator of Health Promotion at Four Corners Regional Health Center. Recently he attended the annual meeting of ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation, where he was trained as a Chapter Director. In his first year, Echo has recruited and trained two VIP disabled speakers (Voices for Injury Prevention). In addition, Mr. Lefthand has worked on the Tour de Rez bicycle event, the Muttonfest, the Writers Workshop, and book donations to Navajo children (all described below).

Muttonfest Supports The Disabled

On April 14, the 6th Annual Muttonfest of the Kayenta Spinal Cord Injury Support Group was held at the home of Chairperson Darlene Singer in Chilchinbito, Arizona. About 100 people attended the celebration, including about 15 disabled individuals as well as many family members, friends, and supporters. While Darlene's team served up a Navajo banquet, Priti Mehta of the Reeve Foundation spoke with Director Echohawk Lefthand about support from the Foundation for the VIP speakers of ThinkFirst Navajo..



Echohawk Lefthand, new Director of ThinkFirst Navajo and Darlene Begay, Coordinator of Health Promotion, Four Corners Regional Health Center at the Muttonfest.

Energizing Literacy For Navajo Children

Magic Tree House Speakers Excite Navajo Children to Read

Mary Pope Osborne started the Magic Tree House series of children's books in 1992. Since then the series has entered most elementary schools across the country, and more than 70 million copies have been sold world-wide. Together the author and her books are a great force for literacy.

On April 16 and 17, 2008, Mary visited Navajo kids in grades 3-6. In four presentations, she showed more than 1,500 Navajo kids that reading is exciting and fun. A representative of the Tribal Council, Leila Help-Tulley thanked her and said, "you energized our children."

Magic Tree House Team Sponsors Writers Workshop for 250 Students

Mary wished to build on the successful visit of 2008. Therefore in 2009, she and her sister Natalie, who writes fact books to complement the fiction books, worked with Navajo teachers in developing a program to boost writing skills of Navajo students. Over several weeks time, students in grades 3 through 5 wrote personal stories and poems. Mary and Natalie read all the written work.

On May 13 in the Red Mesa gym, about 250 students gathered for an awards assembly. Darlene Begay directed the event, with the assistance of Echo Lefthand and Principal Genevieve Begay.

Echo managed a conference call via speaker-phone so that authors Mary and Natalie in Connecticut could converse directly with the student writers. Mary and Natalie chose particularly good work for special commendation. Mary answered questions from about 20 children. Finally, Echo gave out prizes of books and Jacoby Ellsburry tee-shirts for the top poetry writers.

Mary and Natalie attested to the high quality of the writing, ad-



"We loved the Poetry Contest!"

miring especially a phrase created by one boy – "the smell of sand." The smiles on the faces of the students showed how they felt about the event.

Books-a-Go Go Donates 2,000 Books to Navajo Children



Near Red Mesa Elementary School, young students show their feelings about the first shipment of books to them from Betty Metz and Books-a-Go Go.

In the Spring of 2009 at a writers' conference, Mary and Natalie met a remarkable person. She is Betty Metz, the founder of Books-a-Go Go, a not-for-profit organization that gives away books to needy kids. Mary and Natalie suggested that Betty contact Dr. Bob Crowell to consider book donations to the Navajo children. Bob agreed, and the first shipment arrived at Red Mesa, Arizona in May. Betty Metz has very generously pledged to give a total of 2,000 books to the Navajo kids. Mary Pope Osborne agreed to pay the shipping costs.

After Betty Metz created Books-a-Go Go about 3 years ago, she partnered with DriveTime, a used car sales business, with dealerships in many cities. Betty devised a powerful method for book drives: Large receptacles at the dealerships receive donated books,

which are taken to storage rooms for sorting and distribution. In most instances, the books go to Title 1 inner city schools for distribution to individual children from low income families. The child chooses and owns his or her own book – often their first book ever. In the schools, tots get Pre-K books, the beginning readers get books like the Magic Tree House series, and so on. In addition, many books are placed in school libraries, especially reference books.

The results have been phenomenal: In 2007, 30,000 books were donated, and in 2008 the number was 45,000. Betty started near her home in Jacksonville, Florida, where Books-a-Go Go blanketed the inner city of West Jacksonville. With a committed Board and a local staff, Betty carefully organized rapid acquisition, sorting, storage, and distribution of used and purchased kids' books. Following the Jacksonville example, Books-a-Go Go established branches in 66 more cities across the country – Orlando, Chicago, Denver, Phoenix, and Dallas, to name a few. Recently Books-a-Go Go has become international. This very successful organization has attracted media coverage and developed fundraising.

As Betty says, "it's all for the kids," and she has certainly touched a great many of them. The mission is to give books to children from low income families and thus pave the way to education and more fulfilling lives.

New Tool for Literacy: Magic Tree House Teaching Bookshelves in Schools

To enhance literacy, Mary Pope Osborne spoke to 1,500 Navajo children in April 2008. With the recent Workshop, Mary and Natalie enhanced writing skills and self-esteem for 250 students.



Students and teacher check out Magic Tree House Teaching Bookshelf at Red Mesa Elementary School

Now Mary Pope Osborne is taking a further dramatic step to increase literacy on Navajo. Recently she sent 560 of her own books as a donation to the Navajo children of Red Mesa, Arizona. In addition, she has organized the books to function as a powerful teaching device: The books are housed in 28 boxes, each containing 20 copies of a single title. All of the boxes are stored in a designated **Magic Tree House Teaching Bookshelf** at Red Mesa Elementary School.

With the new MTH Teaching Bookshelf, a teacher can take on loan the box containing, for example *Buffalo Before Breakfast*, distribute a copy to each of 20 students, and direct the entire class in reading the book. Note that the MTH Teaching Bookshelf enables several classes to read various books at the same time. Teachers estimate that 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classes may wish to read about 10 MTH books per year. Individual MTH Teaching Bookboxes may also be loaned to the six outlying elementary schools in the region.

We plan to establish similar MTH Bookshelves in schools all across the Navajo Nation. All district School Libraries are staffed with a Librarian, thus assuring orderly lending and security. Within the month of August, we will launch an additional Magic Tree House Bookshelf at the Mesa Elementary School in Shiprock, New Mexico.

In the first week of September at Red Mesa Elementary School, we will celebrate the installation of the first Magic Tree House Teaching Bookshelf. In the very first use of the Teaching Bookshelf, we will lend to a teacher one of the Bookboxes. Students, teachers, and Eve's Fund staff will be on hand. To enliven the event, Mary Pope Osborne will participate by speaker-phone. Press from the Navajo Times will cover the event.

Other Programs

Native HOPE Conferences Help Prevent Suicides

In May of 2008, Dr. Clayton Small introduced his suicide prevention curriculum to the Navajo Nation at the Shiprock High School. The HOPE program uses Navajo tradition and modern psychological measures to forge a connection between the youth and community resources. (HELP stands for 'Help Our People Endure').

Although talking about suicide is taboo for many Indians, Dr. Small encourages students "to break the code of silence" so that young people in distress can reach out for help. The success of the conference is demonstrated by attendance of over 100 students and requests from five other schools for HOPE conferences.

Eve's Fund co-sponsored two HOPE conferences in 2008-9. In addition, Dr. Bob Crowell encouraged key mental health professionals from the State, the Navajo tribe, and the IHS to work with Dr. Small to develop a strong application for a suicide prevention grant from new federal funds ear-marked for prevention of Native suicides.

New Faces at ThinkFirst Navajo

In the past year, several excellent Navajo people have joined ThinkFirst Navajo: Our new Director, Echohawk Lefthand, and new VIPs Darlene Singer and Jerome Jones. Echo was trained at the Annual Meeting of ThinkFirst National, and he in turn trained the new VIPs. In addition, Echo has gone out to schools to assist the VIPs in their initial presentations. Echo has improved scheduling with a workstation and coordinating lunches. We are planning a VIP tour for April 2010 to reach out to 12 schools, especially those never served or underserved.

New Mountain Bikes For Tour de Rez Riders

Every year Tom Riggerbach, Director of Youth Empowerment Services, leads groups of Navajo youth on the Tour de Rez, a summer-long trip that takes riders all around the Reservation. The entire Tour covers 1200 miles, and the average ride of one week goes about 100 miles. About 200 riders participate, with volunteers to help with safety and trail-side education. This year Eve's Fund supported riderships for 10 riders and purchased 12 mountain bikes for the Tour.



A rider in the Tour de Rez on a bike purchased by Eve's Fund.

New Logo

Larissa Kulczycky, niece of Barbara Roy, persuaded her colleague Jenny Sofologis, a respected designer, to create a new logo for Eve's Fund. Using Native colors and forms, Jenny has crafted a striking, culturally sensitive logo. (See banner at top of page 1.) Eve's Fund is deeply appreciative of her work, which she has done pro bono. **Kudos and many thanks, Jenny!**



Using our new logo, award-winning Native jewelry maker Joni Stinson has made a gorgeous logo bracelet for friends of Eve's Fund. **Jonie, thanks for your gift of beauty and splendid craftsmanship!**

New Website

In 2006-2007, Barbara Roy's stepdaughter Vanessa Morse did an excellent job launching the home page of a website for Eve's Fund. In 2008-2009, with help from Vanessa, Larissa, and professionals, Barbara Roy has done a magnificent job in developing a new multi-functional website: <http://www.evecrowellsfund.org>

On this site, you can browse recent program activities and upcoming events. You can also make a donation through the site and its PayPal feature. **Congratulations and thanks to all these hard-working women!**

Programs for 2009-2010

- Expansion of Magic Tree House Bookshelves into more Navajo Schools, as many as ten all over the Navajo Nation.
- Distribution of Books-a-Go Go to 1) School Libraries, with emphasis on Reference bookshelves, and 2) individual students, in schools and clinics. The Reach Out and Read program will help in clinics and Head Start facilities.
- Y.E.S. presentations on outdoor adventures and wellness; further support for Tour de Rez riders.
- New effort to increase bike helmet use through the help of Navajo Jacoby Ellsbury, Boston Red Sox centerfielder.
- 15 VIP presentations by new VIPs. A tour by three VIPs to 15 schools in 10 towns over 7 days
- New Youth Film Camp: 3-day workshops on Digital Story-telling for Navajo youth.

Fund-Raising

- We are applying to Reeve Foundation for support of a tour by VIP speakers in April 2010.
- We will hold our annual benefit event with jewelry sale in October 2009.
- **Annual donations, continuing and new, are critical:**

PLEASE DONATE – HELP NAVAJO KIDS LEARN TO READ AND TO AVOID INJURIES.

\$2.50 buys a Magic Tree House book.

\$6 buys a bike helmet.

\$70 buys 20 copies of an MTH book – a teaching box for a WHOLE CLASS.

\$1400 buys an MTH Bookshelf (560) books) – teaching boxes for a WHOLE SCHOOL.

You can receive a gorgeous logo bracelet for a \$70 donation (Eve's Fund gets 39%).

DONATE by credit card at http://web.me.com/barbararoy/Eves_Fund_Website/Home.html

Checks are also gratefully accepted.

Any donation, at any level, goes to support Native Literacy & Hope, Safety & Wellness.

MANY THANKS FOR SUPPORTING OUR PROGRAMS!

Robert M. Crowell, MD
President, Eve's Fund
Sponsoring Physician,
ThinkFirst Navajo

PMB 168, 180 Elm St. #1
Pittsfield, MA 01201
tel 413 445-7330
rcrowell@nycap.rr.com
Fax 413 442-5721