

Eve's Fund leaders get national award

Program works to prevent brain, spinal cord injuries

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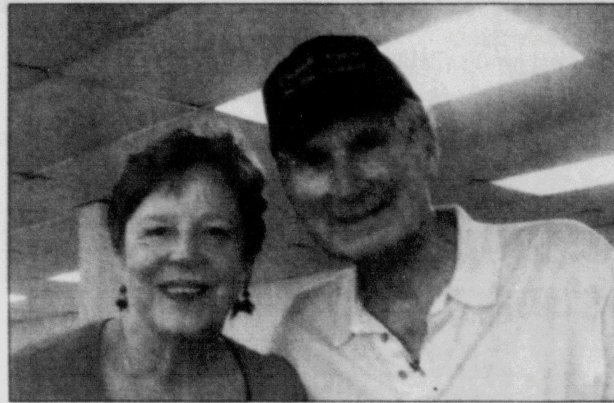
FARMINGTON » The leaders of Eve's Fund for Native American Health Initiatives have received a national award for their work to prevent brain and spinal cord injuries on the Navajo Nation.

Eve's Fund founder Dr. Robert Crowell and president Barbara Crowell Roy have been named Purpose Prize fellows.

The Purpose Prize is awarded by Encore.org, a nonprofit organization that promotes individuals who have a second or "encore" career after retiring from their professions.

"It's great we got the award, but more important is the work we do," Roy said.

Since its establishment, Eve's Fund has offered its program ThinkFirst Navajo — in which has adult Navajos with paraplegia present their personal injury stories while talking about spine and brain injury prevention — to students in first to 12th



COURTESY OF EVE'S FUND

Eve's Fund for Native American Initiatives President Barbara Crowell Roy, left, and founder Dr. Robert Crowell have been named Purpose Prize fellows for their work to prevent brain and spinal cord injuries on the Navajo Nation.

grades on the Navajo Nation.

The conversation includes talking about injuries caused by car crashes, ejections from vehicles, falls, assaults and gunshot wounds. The paraplegic adults also talk about preventative measures such as seat belts, car seats and safety helmets.

Crowell started Eve's Fund in 2005 and named it after the couple's daughter, Eve Erin Crowell, who died that year from an accidental drug and alcohol overdose.

Crowell said his daughter's death gave him a new purpose.

"I channeled my grief into

action and created ThinkFirst Navajo and Eve's Fund," he said.

Crowell is a retired neurosurgeon who volunteered as a consulting neurological surgeon at Northern Navajo Medical Center in Shiprock. His ex-wife, Roy, is a registered nurse, who now teaches English as a second language in Switzerland.

Although they divorced in 1986, both view Eve's Fund as their encore career.

Among the speakers who share their stories with students are sisters Doris Dennison and Darlene Singer.

The sisters were in a truck wreck that paralyzed them three decades ago.

When sharing their stories, the sisters tell students that the outcome would have been different if they wore their seat belts, Roy said.

"That's what makes this program unique," she said. "They are all Navajo and talking to Navajo kids."

So far, the program has made presentations to approximately 18,000 children and visited schools and communities across the reservation.

"Exposure for ThinkFirst/Eve's Fund helps us get the message to more Navajo kids and decrease devastating and fatal injuries," Crowell said about the award.

Throughout the years, Eve's Fund has grown to include suicide prevention, literacy and scholarships programs for Native youth, but the main program continues to be ThinkFirst Navajo, which is the only chapter of the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation to serve Native Americans.

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