

Boarding school victims honored

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Albuquerque, — A Boarding School Healing Action event was held July 17 in Albuquerque. It was attended by 24th Navajo Nation Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley, Tsé' Ahnáozt'í'í, Tooh Haltsooí, Beclabito, Gad'ii'áhi/Tó K'í.

“This is just one step in the healing journey as we tread lightly to recognize the sensitivity on how we proceed forward,” Crotty said. “We will continue to get direction from our cultural advisors and families.”

The healing event was scheduled after an excavation which revealed multiple unmarked graves of Indigenous children at various residential and boarding school sites across the United States and Canada. The remains of 215 Indigenous children were unearthed at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Kamloops, B. C., Canada in June.

U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, announced later that month that a Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative would be launched to review the troubled legacy of federal boarding school policies.

“The Interior Department will address the inter-generational impact of Indian boarding schools to shed light on the unspoken traumas of the past, no matter how hard it will be,” Haaland stated. “I know that this process will be long and difficult. I know that this process will be painful.

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“It won’t undo the heartbreak and the loss we feel,” she said. “But only by acknowledging the past can we work toward a future that we’re all proud to embrace.”

The Boarding School Healing Action event took place at Graves Park to honor the lives of 120 Indigenous children buried at the 4-H Park who attended the Albuquerque Indian School from 1882 to 1933. It also honored school survivors who were traumatized by the abuse and neglect.

“For generations, our families suffered silently with the pain of losing a child or sibling at boarding school,” Crotty said. “This is a time for genuine truth and reconciliation.”

The event included food, healing activities, and traditional dances to promote care and support for the community.

It was organized and supported by ABQ Mutual Aid, Fight for Our Lives, and the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women.

For more information, please visit the Facebook event page at <https://fb.me/e/BUc9AdCs/>.