

NACE brand ambassador places first in age division for Navajo Code Talker 29K

Written by By Rick Abasta Guest Submission
Friday, 27 September 2019 09:27



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. - Aurelius “Aury” Yazzie ran the Code Talker 29K Sept. 8 and came in first place for the 14-and-under age division.

Yazzie is the brand ambassador for Navajo Arts and Crafts Enterprise.

He came in 37th overall in a field of 56 runners with a time of 4:25:35 and an average pace of 14:44. Twenty-nine kilometers is equal to a distance of about 18.02 miles.

The 12-year-old runner is a protégé of Tom Riggensbach, executive director of Navajo Youth Empowerment Services.

NACE CEO Elijah Muskett said, “We made the choice to have Aury as our brand ambassador because he is a great role model for kids and adults. Congratulations on your strong finish while representing our brand.”

It was Yazzie’s third time participating in the Navajo Code Talker 29K, which is a part of the Navajo Parks Race Series. He previously competed in the 10K and 29K.

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This year, he wore his NACE-designed brand ambassador T-shirt, featuring the Horned Moon logo, during the run.

The course began at the trailhead for the Navajo Nation Museum and traveled north past the Window Rock dam and through the old Fish and Wildlife trail before winding through tribal offices to the Window Rock Navajo Tribal Park.

From there, the course traveled through Navajo tribal housing to Navajo Route 12, traveling the post office road back to the start of the museum trailhead again. In total, the race course is 6 miles (equivalent to 10K), and three loops equal the 29K distance.

Yazzie said the most challenging part of the race was running on pavement because of the heat that radiated from it.

He's also a member of the Tiis Nazbas Community School cross-country team, training from Monday through Thursday, averaging about four miles during each session.

"I ride my bike with my parents and I eat healthy so I'll be prepared to run," he said. "I love the Navajo Code Talker 29K and 10K because the whole race honors our Code Talkers."

Yazzie's great nali was Raymond Nakai, former Navajo Tribal Chairman.

"I am close to grandpa (Navajo Code Talker) John Kinsel Sr. He knew my great nali and told us a story of him," he said. "Speaking and understanding Navajo is important."

Before running the Navajo Code Talker 29K, Yazzie spent his Saturday watching the parade and then greeting shoppers at the NACE flagship store.

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He met about 25 people and greeted them by saying, “Hi, my name is Aury Yazzie and I’m the NACE Brand Ambassador. I would like to thank you for shopping here.”

Most customers responded by asking for a 10 percent discount.

“I enjoy being a brand ambassador. My favorite part is running while representing my community and the NACE brand. I’m still getting used to the public speaking,” he said.

Yazzie encourages students and parents to believe in themselves, because anything can be accomplished, especially through faith and the love of family.

His next runs include the Tsail Invitational on Sept. 19 and Shiprock Invitational on Sept. 21 with his cross-country team.

The enterprise also recently signed PBR star Cody Jesus as media influencer and is working toward signing Loren Anthony (Chizh for Chei) as the second media influencer very soon.

While competing businesses selling jewelry and supplies choose to objectify Navajo women in their marketing efforts, NACE has been careful to ensure that positive and community-oriented messages are shared with customers.

“Having positive role models representing our brand sends an engaging point to our customers that resonates with them,” Muskett said.

For more Information: gonavajo.com

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