



RMCHCS and Hozho Center serve 150 meals on Christmas Eve

Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services and the Hozho Center celebrated their first joint Christmas Eve “Festival for the Homeless” event this year. The two organizations combined efforts to spread joy to the community by offering a holiday feast to McKinley County’s homeless residents. One hundred-fifty people were served.

Festivities were held from 9 am to 4 pm at the center’s headquarters at 216 W. Maloney Ave. in Gallup. The event featured hot meals of ham, mashed potatoes, green beans, pie and coffee with extra helpings of holiday cheer.

"It was exciting to see the joy spread among the participants and the many smiling faces," Hozho Center Executive Director Ken Collins said. "We did not have the resources to pull this off ourselves and greatly appreciate the food and staff contributions made by RMCHCS." The Hozho Center currently serves 75 people needing help with behavioral health issues, ranging from treatment for addiction to assistance with diabetes.

Hospital Community Care

"Our collaboration with the Hozho just furthers the idea of hospital community care in which hospitals go beyond traditional medical treatment by caring for the entire community and helping identify the causes of illness which is often rooted in addiction, poverty and homelessness," RMCHCS CEO David Conejo said. "We are proud to work with organizations across McKinley County to make it one of the best places to work and live in."

In addition to donations, the center is funded by a $50,000 grant from the New Mexico State Legislature appropriated by N. M. Rep. D. Wonda Johnson, D - Crownpoint, who also works at RMCHCS.

Brain Injury Support

The English translation of the Navajo word Hozho means peace and harmony. Collins operates the center from the vantage point of being an experienced Certified Peer Support Worker with the wisdom and experience of having a brain injury himself. He notes that many people identify behavioral health with addiction, but do not recognize brain injuries as readily.

“I want to help make people be more aware that many folks coming here have brain injuries and it makes everything harder. It’s [the problem is] invisible and we only see the consequences. Learning how the brain works breaks down the lies people are often told out of embarrassment and the barriers that brings,” Collins said. He is beginning to see more hope as people are starting to get the treatment they need.

The Hozho Center for Personal Enhancement is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization, formed in 2008 to advocate, educate and promote the best way to serve the unmet needs of individuals experiencing mental health and homelessness on the streets of Gallup and McKinley County. The center offers counseling, food, AA and NA meetings, recovery circles, sweat lodges, and supports group healing circles where people can grow and can take a break.

By William Madaras
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