

Violence Against Women Awareness gets award

The Albuquerque FBI Division has presented the 2018 Director's Community Leadership Award to the Mescalero Apache Tribe Violence Against Women Awareness Program.

Started in 2015 as part of a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, the program provides services to victims of domestic violence and other violent crimes, as well as implementing educational programs about domestic violence and human trafficking.

Each of the FBI's 56 field offices annually selects an individual or organization to receive the award, which recognizes efforts in combating crime, terrorism, drugs, and violence in America.

VAWA Director Lola Ahidley has been invited to a ceremony on May 3 in Washington, D.C., where FBI Director Christopher Wray will present her and other recipients with crystal awards.

"The Mescalero Apache Tribe Violence Against Women Awareness Program has greatly increased awareness of domestic violence and other crimes," Albuquerque FBI Special Agent in Charge James Langenberg said. "The FBI is proud to recognize the hard work of those who are improving communication among victims, families, law enforcement, and the courts to help break the generational cycle of violence."

Ahidley, who is a Mescalero Apache, works with two assistants to offer free counseling to domestic violence victims and conduct no-cost community prevention and education on bullying, elder fraud, sex trafficking, and domestic violence.

VAWA meets regularly with U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs victim services specialists to staff cases, and to provide for immediate needs not funded under BIA or FBI programs, such as lodging, clothing, hygiene items, and cell phones for victims of domestic violence and other violent crimes.

FBI honors Mescalero Apache Tribe program

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VAWA attends arraignments for domestic violence victims in Mescalero Apache tribal court, and successfully requested to have an ordinance passed by the tribal government, to allow advocates in court at the request of a victim.

The program recently sponsored a two-day women's self-defense training seminar that was so popular that Ahidley has been asked to repeat it.

VAWA is conducting a program to raise awareness of human trafficking, especially around the tribe's casinos and truck stops. They offer training for employees of those businesses, and have put messages on billboards throughout the reservation.

More information about VAWA can be found at: <https://mescaleroapachetribe.com/mescalero-vaw/>

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