

## Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise celebrates successful interns

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 20 September 2019 04:11

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### Nearly 50 Navajo College Students at Navajo Gaming

#### Internship Program

Twin Arrow, Ariz. - The Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise celebrated another successful summer with its 2019 interns with a recent recognition event at the beautiful Twin Arrows Casino Resort. Navajo Gaming's summer internship program was created in 2016 to team up Navajo students with senior-level mentors in their field of study, provide opportunities to gain real-world experience, facilitate preparation for high-caliber jobs after graduation, and strengthen Navajo Gaming. Nearly 50 college-aged Navajo students have successfully completed the program over the past four years.

"Navajo Gaming strives to positively impact future leaders of the Nation through an internship program that brings Navajo students back to the Nation, allows them to provide meaningful contributions to the enterprise and learn from knowledgeable mentors eager to help them succeed," Navajo Gaming Interim CEO Brian Parrish said. "We're grateful for these interns' commitment and the learning experience it is for both our team and the students, as together we work to improve Navajo Gaming for the benefit of the Navajo people."

Since 2016, Navajo Gaming has expanded its internship initiatives, and in 2018, hired 20 Navajo students to learn how to build a business from the ground up. The Travel Plaza Project allowed recent graduates from educational institutions in the Four Corners to learn business theory, as well as practical application, while contributing to the design, construction, and operations of the Travel Center - depending on their areas of study. Navajo Gaming senior

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leadership provided valuable mentorship and monitoring of the highly successful program. The students' efforts will be on display in late fall when the Navajo Blue Travel Plaza, located adjacent to Twin Arrows Casino Resort, holds its grand opening.

Quincy Natay, Chairman of the Navajo Gaming Board of Directors added, "We believe in supporting our Navajo people through education coupled with on-the-job experiences."

At the event, this year's six exemplary interns shared how Navajo Gaming helped them determine career paths, foster a better understand of their strengths, and gain more confidence, as they look for rewarding jobs after graduation.

### ***SUMMER 2019 INTERNS:***

#### **Ashton Keams, Leupp, Ariz.**

Keams, a graduate from Winslow High School, is attending Arizona State University, majoring in economics with a minor in mathematics. Keams served with the accounting team at Twin Arrows Casino Resort, as well as with mentor Adam Parker, director of financial planning and analysis. Part of Keams internship involved researching the local and national economy and how Navajo Gaming's four properties positively impact regional economics through job creation and community stabilization.

Keams gratefully shared, "The experiences and opportunities given to me while working at NNGE will forever make an impact on my future and I hope to return to the Navajo Nation after completing school."

#### **Charla Keyaanie, Luepp, Ariz.**

Keyaanie, a graduate of Northern Arizona University majoring in Visual Communication, served with the marketing team at Twin Arrows Casino Resort. She grew up in the Navajo tradition and

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was grateful to see the plethora of traditional aspects incorporated in the architecture, interior design and custom artwork at Twin Arrows. Her internship projects included graphic design for a number of concert posters; events and activities, as well as the on-site Ripple Coffee Machines, where she incorporated a traditional element - a Navajo wedding basket - into modern marketing materials and signage. Additionally, she worked with the Twin Arrows special events team to successfully coordinate small events and large concerts.

### **Hahnabah Manygoats, Tiis Ts'oh Sikaad, N.M.**

Manygoats, a student at San Juan College majoring in Information Technology, interned with the IT team at Northern Edge Casino. During her internship she was instrumental in streamlining internal processes and improving the Job Role Access Control Form - an automated internal form. In addition, she managed inventory for Northern Edge's desktop and laptop computers, which involved programming and installation of new software for each computer.

Manygoats reflected, "Reading and learning in a school setting will not give you the kind of experiences that I was able to acquire while working at Northern Edge. For this I am excited and no longer afraid of this field of study."

### **Jancee Etsitty, Page, Ariz.**

Etsitty, a graduate of Northern Arizona University, served in Navajo Gaming's executive offices with her mentor Carmen Tracy, Navajo Gaming's executive office manager. Etsitty became a vital team member as she researched, summarized and prepared vital documents and presentations for the Gaming board of directors' meetings, briefings for Navajo Nation tribal leadership, as well as a resource for other key gaming executives. However, the most important aspect of her internship was gaining a deep understanding of Indian Gaming's operations, regulations, and the oversight of the gaming board and Navajo leadership.

### **Lynnae Joe, Gallup**

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Joe, a student at University of New Mexico - Gallup, received her certificate in Organizational Management and Public Administration in fall, 2018, and will return to UNM to pursue an A.A. in Business Administration in fall, 2019. She served with mentor Tresha Apadoca, Fire Rock Casino Human Resources Director. Joe became proficient in a range of HR responsibilities involving hiring and retaining team members including; setting interviews for potential Fire Rock team members, customer service skills relating to incoming applicants, and the NNGE application process.

### **Vivian Todachinnie, Farmington, N.M.**

Todachinnie, a graduate student at the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business at Utah State University, served with the HR department at Northern Edge Casino. Her internship involved all aspects of HR including maintaining employee privacy, organizing and managing sensitive materials, as well as proper solicitation of gaming vendors, and the request for proposal process.

When asked by Northern Edge Casino General Manager Cliff Enrich about the impact of the program and what can be improved moving forward, Todachinnie shared, "We as interns are now great advocates of Navajo Gaming through our word-of-mouth recommendations. We will share what we've learned with others as we return to school and help increase awareness of the positive impact Navajo Gaming had on us as student interns, as well as how it benefits the Nation as a whole."

***For the latest news and information visit Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprises' website: [navajogaming.com](http://navajogaming.com)***