

## Promoting literacy 'Read Across Navajo Nation Month' kicks off

Written by Staff Reports  
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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, First Lady Phefelia Nez, and Second Lady Dottie Lizer signed a proclamation on March 2, recognizing March 2022 as “Read Across Navajo Nation Month,” in coordination with “Read Across America” to celebrate the joys of reading and to promote literacy to enhance the lives of Navajo students and families.

The signing ceremony was held at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock, Ariz., with Miss Navajo Nation Niagara Rockbridge and Navajo Nation Library Program Supervisor Donovan Pete in attendance.

“Celebrating the joy of reading together, as a community and a Nation, inspires our children to read, which is an important factor in their pursuit of higher education and a better quality of life,” Nez said. “Reading can significantly benefit a child’s language skills, academic success, family bonds, concentration, creativity, imagination, and awareness. Committed families, educators, and community members can make a huge difference in our children’s reading ability and development.”

The proclamation states that reading to children is proven to develop language skills, expand vocabulary, build self-confidence, boost imagination, cultivate their awareness of the world around them, and strengthen family and community bonds.

“By signing this proclamation, we are re-committing ourselves to pave a path to literacy. Together, we can begin a tradition to read at bedtime, gather in classrooms for story time, create community book clubs, and visit our school or community libraries. Books can help build our children’s future,” Lizer said.

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During the signing ceremony, the leaders also read portions of Dr. Seuss books in celebration of Dr. Seuss's birthday on March 2, which brings thousands of schools, libraries, and community centers across the country together to encourage reading and learning among youth.

"During Read Across Navajo Nation Month, we encourage families to read together and to inspire all children and youth to read," Phefelia Nez said. "This month, take the time to incorporate reading into your children's schedule and routine. Reading to your child – at any age – will boost their confidence, brain development, creativity, and language skills. Reading also provides a wonderful opportunity for parents to connect with their children. It's a wonderful way to spend time together after a long day of errands, chores, school, or work."

Lizer expressed her gratitude for the Navajo Nation Library and their efforts to cultivate an awareness of the importance of reading.

"The Office of the First Lady and Second Lady has [a] shared interest in promoting literacy. We are committed to a partnership in expanding upon initiatives such as this," she said.

Rockbridge explained that 95 percent of a child's brain is developed by the age of five. With that in mind, it's important to practice early childhood literacy by reading books such as *Cat in the Hat*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*.

"These were some of my favorites growing up and being in school indulging in books like *Green Eggs and Ham*," she said. "I encourage parents to pick up a book and read to your children."

In observance of "Read Across Navajo Nation Month," the Navajo Nation Library will host virtual story times led by guest readers and provide free books on the library's social media pages.

***For more details, please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/NavajoNationLibrary> . The Office of the President and Vice President thanks the Navajo Nation Library, Office of Miss Navajo Nation, and the Department of Diné Education for their support.***

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