



February 2016

MISSION GRANT STORY

HOPE AND HEALING TO THE NAVAJO PEOPLE \$75,000

The Navajo Nation is the largest native people group in the United States. Over the years, the Rocky Mountain District LWML and LWML have reached out to the Navajo people. In 1969 a parsonage and guest house were built for Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Navajo, New Mexico. In 1979 an LWML Mission Grant funded the construction of an educational wing. The community was growing, and under the leadership of a young pastor, the future looked bright. Eight years ago the pastor retired leaving no one to serve the worshipers who remained. Lack of employment opportunities and behaviors that often accompany poverty began to dim the light of hope. In 2013 however, Tim Norton, a trained DCE and former LCMS missionary to Africa, was called as a missionary-at-large to the Navajo people.

In partnership with Lutheran Indian Ministries, Norton is working

to establish after school enrichment programs for children, Boys/Girls Clubs, youth camps, a men's Bible group, and a support group for abused women. Mentoring and training Navajo people for lay-leadership opportunities is another vital part of this program.

In 2014, four Navajo men accompanied Norton to Alaska to work with the Athabaskan people of Minto, Alaska, to restore a cultural recovery camp. The Navajo people once migrated from that area, and Athabaskan and Navajo are both from the Diné people group. This reconnection and celebration of a common heritage, and the opportunity to share the Gospel, will offer mutual long term benefits.

It is with hopeful and thankful hearts that the LWML reaches out to our Navajo brothers and sisters. May our mite offerings truly help to bring hope and healing to the Navajo people.