



The Navajo Nation
Yideeskáadi Nitsáhákees

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Navajo First Lady Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren says Welcome Baby Celebration will be ‘fun, exciting to welcome the newest members of the Navajo Nation’

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Planning for the first Navajo Nation Welcome Baby Celebration is ramping up fast to become the “can’t miss” event of the spring.

Moms, dads, grandparents and new babies born between April 2023 and April 2024 will be treated to 500 catered lunches, “Welcome to the Navajo Nation” certificates for every baby, great prizes for top Baby Parade winners, and a Grand Prize to the first registered baby.

The celebration is on Thursday, April 18, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the *Bee Hóldzil* Fighting Scouts Event Center in Fort Defiance, Ariz. It is hosted by the Office of Navajo Nation First Lady Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren with principal sponsors First Things First of Arizona and the Navajo Breastfeeding Coalition.

“This is all about welcoming and celebrating all the Navajo babies born in the last year,” the First Lady said. “It’s going to be fun and exciting to welcome the newest members of the Navajo Nation. We

want to really inspire and encourage new and growing Navajo families of the next generation.”

A two-page agenda includes a book reading by the First Lady and Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren, breastfeeding education by the Navajo Breastfeeding Coalition, cradleboard teachings by Bidii Baby Foods owner Zachary Ben and faith-based parenting knowledge with Pastor Wallace Begay of the Shiprock Pentecostal Church.

Entertainment from Navajo Highways Puppet Show will be provided by renowned Navajo puppeteer Pete Sands of Moab, Utah.

Mr. Sands said Navajo children really respond to hearing and seeing puppets speak Navajo.

“Oh, man, they’re like blown away,” he said. “It has a huge impact on kids. Puppets are the appeal. It makes the Navajo culture and language cool again.”

There is still time for the first 200 babies to be registered to receive giveaway items.



OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY

A Baby Parade sponsored by the Navajo Nation Department for Child Care & Development will have prizes for Best Dressed, Most Photogenic, Chubbiest Cheeks, Traveled the Farthest and Best Hair Style. Baby blankets, diapers and gift bags will be given away.

“An event like this is a great way to reach local parents and their little babies,” First Lady Blackwater-Nygren said.

The Navajo Nation Department of Transportation will present information about child passenger safety and the value of child safety seats whenever a little one is in a vehicle.

The Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services will offer free vision and hearing screenings. The Navajo Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services will discuss “Fatherhood and Motherhood is Sacred.”

The Navajo EMS team will show parents how to perform infant CPR. First Things First will offer “Popsicle Picture Frames & Parenting Conversations.” First Things First is Arizona’s early childhood agency that is committed to the healthy development and learning of young children from birth to age 5.

Booths will share more information and resources to assist parents, caregivers and families.

The idea for the Welcome Baby Celebration arose last November in a conversation between First

Lady Blackwater-Nygren, President Nygren and Amanda Singer, executive director of the Navajo Breastfeeding Coalition.



Ms. Singer said a friend of hers from the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in Minnesota told her their tribe celebrates the arrival of newborns each year.

“We just talked and I let the First Lady know about the purpose behind it,” Ms. Singer said. “We kind of just picked it up from there and we’re all running with it. We just want to make sure that our Navajo babies are honored and just help welcome them.”

The Navajo Nation Welcome Baby Celebration will practice both RSV and COVID-19 precautions to keep babies and parents healthy.

To register, click the link:
<https://opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/welcome-baby/>

For more information, contact Daryn Sells, executive assistant to the First Lady, at daryn.sells@navajo-nsn.gov, or Rachel Taylor, executive assistant to deputy chief of staff, at rachel.taylor@navajo-nsn.gov.

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