



Native American Self-Advocacy Project
ADDPC-FFY19-SA-02
Narrative Summary: October 1, 2020 – April 7, 2021

The Native American Disability Law Center's (Law Center) self-advocacy program focuses on increasing the number of self-advocates in the Navajo community. The Law Center works with the Exceptional Student Services (ESS) Program at Greyhills Academy High School (Greyhills) in Tuba City, Arizona. By incorporating the program into the High School's existing curriculum, the Law Center reaches students directly and consistently. The program helps the students develop self-advocacy skills through supporting them as they make and give voice to their own decisions.

The program begins with an introduction on the concept of self-advocacy skills provided by the Law Center's Advocate, Annette Yazzie. In addition, the Law Center's Government and Community Liaison, Hoskie Benally, meets with the students, provides his personal story about his disability and experiences with advocacy, and explains the two Medicine Wheels, a Navajo philosophy, which provides the students with a framework to view their own growth. The subsequent sessions provide information on the IDEA and the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, identifying the difference between an IEP and a 504 Plan, and identifying the roles of an IEP Team. The program also includes guest speakers such as a former Grey Hills student who presents on how he used the advocacy skills he learned to develop a transition plan that resulted in him attending Utah State University. A State VR counselor presents on how to obtain VR services and how they can support the student as they transition to college, job training and/or employment. The remaining sessions will cover disability disclosure, obtaining reasonable accommodations, and the post-assessment survey. During the final session, the students will demonstrate their self-advocacy skills by providing presentations on their academic, personal, and professional goals during or after high school.

During the past year, the sessions have been held virtually. The participation fluctuated from seven to fifteen students between ninth and twelfth grades, including five seniors.

Efforts to expand the program to Dine College have been unsuccessful. The Law Center has, however, been in touch with the Hopi Vocational Rehabilitation Program and is planning on expanding the program into the Hopi community. The Hopi VR staff have agreed to help reach potential participants and recommended that the Law Center contact the Hopi Youth Program to directly connect with young people, who may benefit from the program. Additionally, the Law Center plans to work with the Hopi VR staff to connect with parents so that they have a better understanding of their children's rights. The Law Center may be able to begin these activities in the next couple of months but plans on more active measures beginning in August.