



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Delegate Shepherd and Ganado community show support for local athlete



Photo: Benefit Song and Dance at the Ganado Field House for Charles Claw, Jr. on April 23, 2016.

GANADO, Ariz. – At a benefit song and dance on Saturday, Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Łichíí, Steamboat) spoke to a crowd of over 100 people at the Ganado Field House, during an event held in support of local high school student Charles Claw, Jr. who will be competing in a cross-country race in Australia.

Claw, Jr. is Ma'ii Deeshgiizhiiii (Coyote Pass People) born for Bjjh Bitoo'nii (Deer Spring Clan), his maternal grandfather is Tótsohnii (Big Water Clan) and his paternal grandfather is Deeshchii'nii (Start of the Red Streaked People). He is 16 years old and is a junior at Ganado High School.

Claw, Jr. qualified for the Arizona high school state cross-country tournament and was then invited to compete in Australia with the Down Under Sports Cross Country Team for nine-days

beginning on June 25. He will not only represent his high school and the state of Arizona, but he will be representing the United States at the international competition.

Delegate Shepherd commended Claw, Jr., stating that his hard work paid off and that his family should be proud of this remarkable opportunity to compete in a cross-country competition against other countries.

“Charles has made great strides to be recognized as a top cross-country runner in the state of Arizona, and that has made his family very proud. He will be representing the Navajo Nation and the U.S. at the Australian competition, and we stand behind him one hundred percent,” said Delegate Shepherd.

He also thanked the audience for attending the benefit song and dance and said their support made it possible to allow the “trip of a lifetime” for Claw, Jr. to represent the Navajo people.

According to Reada Claw and Charles Claw, Sr., the parents of Claw Jr., his family is hoping to raise approximately \$8,000 before the June 1 deadline, which will cover costs for registration, airfare, passport, insurance, meals, and lodging. Claw, Jr. will also need to raise an additional \$1,000 for personal expenses.

“I want to thank the Ganado community for supporting my son. So far they have helped with a lot of donations and they have been nothing but supportive to our families’ efforts,” said Mrs. Claw.

She added that the family would hold additional benefit song and dances on May 7 and May 21 at the Ganado Field House. The event includes a raffle of items ranging from baked goods, hay, and house ware items.

Claw, Jr. also has a GoFundMe page where he is currently accepting donations from the public. You may access the page at <https://www.gofundme.com/bujtv3wc> and can be shared on social media sites.

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