



## **Statement upon the passing of Michael Austin Davis and Tyson Gene Haycock**

It was with deep sadness and shock that we received news of the passing of Michael and Tyson while serving the Ramah Navajo Nation community. We knew Michael well when he served alongside Navajo Nation Northern Diné communities during the very worst of the pandemic, which was a time of great community need. Tyson was primarily in Ramah but all our communities are linked together. These young men worked no differently than as if they were, themselves, community members. They are appreciated and celebrated for their spirit and character by all of us. We join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and the families of Michael and Tyson as we remember and celebrate the life they shared among us.

For almost a full year at the Shiprock Church, distributions of essential supplies were coordinated on a weekly basis as part of the Northern Diné COVID Relief Effort, which we all are. Food, water, toys, cleaning supplies and PPEs would be distributed at that staging point for individual families and also for responders gathering there with pick-ups and trailers from our Northern communities and senior centers of Aneth, Beclabito, Cove, Cudeii, Nenahnezad, Red Mesa, Red Valley, San Juan, Sweetwater, Teec Nos Pos, Hogback, Upper Fruitland, District 11 Fire at Dizlth-na-o-dith-Hle, and of course, Shiprock. It was an immense weekly undertaking.

Michael was with our communities from the very beginning, Tyson much more recent. When it was time to get ready, to prep the pallet jacks and set up signs, prep the church parking lot, open the entrance doors to line up cars, start paperwork and discuss how many boxes to families, to public health nurses and communities, they were always excited because they knew they were going to meet people. Michael would be texting, “When are the trucks coming?” The semi trucks would appear on the narrow side road and Michael would run to the farthest gate to let them in. For unloading and prepping food on the ground, he would be the first to begin. He would say, “Open the gates! All right! Let’s do this!” It was hard work but also enjoyment. These young men were not afraid. They had a big heart. They would forget to drink water, they would be so into it, week after week, that they didn’t want to take breaks until they were done. We brought them round to other communities, including home deliveries. We ate together in the open under the trees. Michael was not a pizza man. He preferred chicken. He loved Sonics. Our relief teams became good friends.

Thank you for sharing Michael and Tyson with us. They are appreciated, acknowledged and loved by all of us.

Retired Chief Justice Herb Yazzie, Board Chair, Indian Country Grassroots (fiscal sponsor to NDCVRE); Shiprock Chapter President Emeritus Chili Yazzie; Shiprock Agency Navajo Nation Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton; Dr. Lydia Kim, Pediatrician, Shiprock; all NDCVRE relief teams; Navajo Family Voices hotline team.

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