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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**JUDICIAL BRANCH GRANTS ADMINISTRATOR AWARDED COMMUNITY  
LEADER OF DISTINCTION**

Raquel Chee, the Judicial Branch's grants administrator, was presented a Community Leader of Distinction award on December 4, 2018, during the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's 2018 Tribal Youth Conference for her work in securing grant funding for the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch.

The branch currently has grant awards for seven projects including the New Path Re-entry project, Supporting Court Involved Individuals with Mental Health, Navajo Wellness Courts, Capacity Building to Respond to Family Violence, Navajo Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court for Chinle Judicial District, Peacemaking Youth Education and Apprenticeship Program, and Improving Probation Outcomes, which provides training in moral reconation for probation officers.

OJJDP had asked for nominations for the awards, which go to a tribal leader who "has contributed and supported the vision of OJJDP which is a nation where children are free from crime and violence." Seven awardees were selected by the 2018 National Tribal Youth Conference selection committee.

In announcing the award to Chee, Anna Rangel Clough of the Indian Country Child Trauma Center said, "She was nominated because she has gone above and beyond to secure numerous grants and funding sources to support the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch. She has a commitment to her community and she has worked well in bridging numerous service providers and community resources. She has assisted in the development of many programs in helping crime-affected families. She is supporting all of the future of Navajo Diné leaders and she was nominated because they say she is an exceptional individual with a commitment to providing hope for the future for her communities."

Chee said that it was a humbling experience to be honored for doing her job. "There are so many people within the branch who do their work to ensure you do yours. The award is theirs," Chee

said. “Diné youth deserve all the effort we can put into their leadership development. It’s our job to teach them how to advocate, develop and interpret policy to improve our people’s lives,” she added.

Chee assisted the Navajo Nation Youth Advisory Council with its presentation at the conference. Angel Hicks, secretary of the Youth Advisory Council, presented on perspectives on prevention from youth. The Youth Advisory Council was established in April 2017 to provide policy advice to the three branches of Navajo Nation government on youth issues and concerns.

The Judicial Branch’s Peacemaking Program also presented during a session on, “Restorative Justice Circle Peacemaking Panel,” about its grant to implement the Youth Apprenticeship Program where staff and peacemakers train young students to become peer mentors and peacemakers within their communities and schools. The Peacemaking Program has developed curriculum for youth to learn peacemaking and, in 2016, graduated 100 youth from its first program. The Peacemaking Program received a second grant to continue and expand its Youth Apprentice Program.

The Tribal Youth Conference supports the goals of the OJJDP, which “provides national leadership, coordination and resources to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency and victimization.” The theme for this year’s conference was, “Reclaiming the Sacred Circle: Justice and Healing for Tribal Youth through Prevention, Intervention and Treatment.” There were three tracks of sessions for attendees that included prevention, intervention and treatment.

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