

2023

Theresa Hatathlie-Delmar Fundraises and Stock-Piles For Navajo Nation Prior to the National Two-Week Quarantine

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Hatathlie-Delmar, Theresa, "Interview with Theresa Hatathlie-Delmar" (2021). Auntie Sewing Squad Interviews. 64. https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/auntiesewing_interviews/64

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**Theresa Hatathlie-Delmar Fundraises and Stock-Piles For Navajo Nation Prior to the
National Two-Week Quarantine**
Primary Source Excerpt

Historical Context: Navajo Nation includes nearly 174,000 people living on tribal lands in New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. News outlets reported that COVID-19 reached Navajo Nation after participants congregated at Chilchibeto Church on March 7, 2020. Confirmed cases of COVID-19 rose rapidly from 26 on March 17 to 49 on March 21. Navajo Nation quickly became a hotbed for COVID-19 infection. Indigenous communities were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 due to the failure of the United States in living up to its treaty obligations, including providing health services. Theresa Hatathlie-Delmar is a member of the Navajo Nation and part of the Deer Springs and Salt clans. She describes the beginnings of her grassroots organization, the Navajo and Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief Funds, later named Yee Ha'ólníí Doo DBA. Hatathlie-Delmar later coordinated with the Auntie Sewing Squad to get sewing supplies and make masks for Navajo Nation.

Listen to the Audio: (32:35-36:29)

Interview with Theresa Hatathlie-Delmar: You can tell where those sicknesses started popping up. And so we organized on the 15th those 12 females in various leadership roles on the Navajo reservation we were hearing about. It wasn't like, if it's not going to happen, it was if it happens, that's what we knew. When and if it happens, we didn't think that it was that we were prepared as a nation. Definitely not our government. So what we decided to do was, hey, let's just get together and raise \$50,000 and each one of us, we came from different communities, and so that each individual would be able to take a certain amount of money and help their own community. That was the plan. \$50,000 was our goal. So we launched a fundraiser on Sunday. By Monday, we raised \$5000. In 30 days, we raised more than a million dollars. And so when this was on the 15th and then by the 17th was when that first case was reported. And so leading up to that, there was a lot of just being observant and the news and listening out, keeping in our ears to the ground where we would hear of this mysterious illness. And sure enough, it popped up. And the place where this event happened, so on the 17th, it was reported in the morning and by that evening, we have people down here in the valley who had gone shopping and buy the truckloads of food for a two-week supply. And so that's what people were talking about two week quarantine. But what we talked about is we only have 13 grocery stores on the reservation. Literally, there are all Bashas' grocery stores and they're not stocked like Walmart too. Because of the very high prices, many people go to the border towns like in Flagstaff or Gallup or Page or in Farmington. That's where people go to get their groceries, their toiletries, their cleaning supplies. And so when all of this news was happening on this site, what we were seeing around the world talking about stocking up, making sure this and that was in your home. We started noticing that the shelves were going empty. That's what we saw. And so in Flagstaff, which is about two and a half mile drive from the reservation to Flagstaff, already that Wal-Mart was already empty. And so we had to do the shopping another two and a half hour drive, which is in Phoenix, Arizona, in that vicinity. So that's where we did this shopping. There was three individuals that went out and they just did the shopping. We didn't know really what we were buying, but as females, we know what's needed at least for two weeks. Something that stable shelf ready and something that's quick to fix. We got freezers, we got ice chests and we went out

there and on the 17th when it was reported around this time in the evening we showed up there with 30 boxes of supplies, food for those families that were now in quarantine.

Discussion Questions: Why did Theresa and several Indigenous women spring into action rather than wait for government aid? How did Theresa and several Indigenous women organize to obtain supplies and resources for Navajo Nation? What kinds of supplies did they obtain and why would they need those?

Source Citation: Hatathlie-Delmar, Theresa, "Interview with Theresa Hatathlie-Delmar" (2021). Auntie Sewing Squad Interviews. 64.
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