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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HONORS NAVAJO HEALTH PROVIDER WITH ALLIED PROFESSIONAL AWARD

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department’s Office for Victims of Crime, a component of the Office of Justice Programs, presented Pfwann Eskee of Montezuma Creek, Utah, with the Allied Professional Award. This award category recognizes an individual or individuals from a specific discipline outside the victim assistance field for their service to victims and contribution to the victim assistance field.

“Pfwann Eskee has made it possible for crime victims in some of America’s most remote communities to benefit from high-quality mental health and substance use treatment and comprehensive care,” said OJP Acting Assistant Attorney General Maureen A. Henneberg. “Even as the pandemic has taken a disproportionately heavy toll on the people of the Navajo Nation, she has seen to it that victims of violence and abuse receive the emotional support they need and the material assistance they deserve.”

Pfwann Eskee, a licensed counselor with Utah Navajo Health Systems, provides behavioral health services to rural tribal communities. As a member of a tribal community herself, she provides trusted aid and support to those who have experienced violence and trauma. In addition to her behavioral health work, Ms. Eskee administers the WeAreNavajo.org website, which provides community outreach, online resources and information for survivors. Ms. Eskee also takes part in Sexual Assault Response Team meetings.

During the pandemic, in addition to her daily work, Ms. Eskee organized efforts to aid her communities with donations, updates about changes in services and deliveries of essential items to elders and their families. In the most difficult of times, she fulfilled the unmet needs of the most vulnerable in her care and in her community.

“The features of its landscape that make the Navajo Nation a place of incomparable beauty – its vast, open spaces, the ruggedness of its terrain – can pose great challenges to victims in need of help,” said OVC Acting Director Katherine Darke Schmitt. “Through her resourcefulness and her gift for outreach – not to mention her clinical expertise – Ms. Eskee has found a way to deliver services and support to tribal members struggling in the wake of violence and abuse.”

Every April, OVC leads communities across the country in observing National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. President Reagan proclaimed the first Victims’ Rights Week in 1981, calling for greater sensitivity to the rights and needs of victims. The 40th anniversary of NCVRW took place this year, April 18-24, and featured the theme, “Support Victims. Build Trust. Engage Communities,” which emphasizes the importance of leveraging community support to victims.

The Office of Justice Programs provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance and other resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, advance racial equity in the administration of justice, assist victims and enhance the rule of law. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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