



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE DENAN PROJECT'S SUPPORT OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS' FAMILY SPIRIT PROGRAM FOR MORE THAN 150 YOUNG NAVAJO MOTHERS IN ARIZONA BEGINS TODAY

Woodbury, CT, December 7, 2015 –The Denan Project announced that training of more than 20 Native American medical community health nurses, paraprofessionals, and health technicians begins today as part of its support for young mothers and their families at the three Navajo communities of Chinle, Pinon, and Tsaile in Arizona, where 43% of the population lives below the poverty level. Once trained, these health workers will provide a series of home-based lessons to expectant and young mothers. By the end of the first year, the program will support 150 at-risk families in their homes, a number slated to grow in subsequent years.

The Denan Project, a Connecticut-based nonprofit, has committed financial resources over two years to support the Family Spirit program of the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health. This home-visiting initiative promotes optimal health and well-being for new parents and their children. After nearly 12 years of operation in Africa, Asia and Latin America, this marks the first program The Denan Project supports involved in within the United States.

“Given our mission to provide health and development assistance to the world’s most under-served people in its remotest and poorest places, we felt it was right to work closer to home and identified the Family Spirit initiative as an excellent partner. Together, we chose Chinle, Arizona as the place to start,” said Dick Young, President and Founder of The Denan Project.

With the support of The Denan Project, staff members from the Public Health Nursing Department at the Chinle Comprehensive Health Care Facility will receive the necessary training and certification to support young Native American mothers from pregnancy to three years postpartum, providing them the knowledge and skills to help their children achieve optimal development through preschool.

Jarret Schecter, The Denan Project Vice President and leader for this effort, added, “This project was chosen based on identification of a specific health need, which is both the key characteristic we seek in selecting all of our projects and the core of the

support The Denan Project provides. It also fits well with our desire to create the opportunity for a better life for impoverished and minority communities.”

“Johns Hopkins is delighted to welcome The Denan Project and the added value it brings to the Chinle community,” said Kristen Speakman, Assistant Program Director for the Family Spirit Program. “The Denan Project’s emphasis on diligence in monitoring for measurable outcomes is in alignment with our practices. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration over the coming years.”

About The Denan Project:

The Denan Project is an all-volunteer, community-based nonprofit organization that provides health and development assistance to under-served people living in remote areas, in some of the world’s poorest places. In addition to Chinle, Arizona, The Denan Project also works in Denan, Ethiopia; Ouadaradouo, Burkina Faso; Tariat, Mongolia; and Uratari, Peru. Working with regional government and nongovernmental agencies, we strive to make these communities self-reliant by developing and implementing long-term, sustainable solutions. Because we are run entirely by volunteers, more than 96% of the funds that were donated between the years of 2009 and 2014 went toward helping people in the locations we serve. The Denan Project is listed on Charity Navigator and GuideStar, and can be followed through Twitter @TheDenanProject and through Facebook at The Denan Project. For more information visit: www.thedenanproject.org.

About The Family Spirit Program:

Family Spirit is an evidence-based and culturally tailored home-visiting program delivered by Native American paraprofessionals to support young Native American women from pregnancy to three years postpartum. Parents gain knowledge and skills to ensure maternal health through childbirth and to achieve optimal development for their infants and preschool-aged children across the domains of physical, cognitive, social-emotional, language learning, and self-help. This in-home parent training and support program has been designed, implemented, and rigorously evaluated by the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health in partnership with Navajo, White Mountain Apache, and San Carlos Apache tribal communities since 1995. Family Spirit now operates in 59 reservation-based and urban Native American communities across 14 states throughout the country. For further information visit: www.jhsph.edu/research/affiliated-programs/family-spirit/.

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