

## Service Before Self, Integrity First, Excellence In All We Do

Is the mantra for Utah's Air National Guard while bridging the gap between technology and the Navajo culture.

In this age of cell phones, the Internet and running water, it's hard to imagine a place in the United States without these things. However, in the remote town of Teec Nos Pos, Ariz., it is daily life.

The T'iis Nazbas Community School is located on a Navajo reservation in the Four Corners region. Many of the people there have neither electricity nor running water. So for the community school of about 300, receiving computers three years ago was a huge leap ahead.

In the last four years, members from the Utah Air National Guard have made six visits to this small school to help update its technology and enrich the education of its students.

After a request for outdated government computers four years ago, Mr. Pat Baxtrum, the school's technology coordinator, has received hundreds of computers. Unfortunately, the amount of work required to get those antiquated machines working properly was too much work for one lone man. That's where the Utah Air National Guard

comes in.

During their most recent trip to Teec Nos Pos, Utah Guardsmen assisted Mr. Baxtrum in getting 130 computers working; something one man definitely could not do in one week.

In the Utah Air National Guard, members get on a waiting list just to go on this short TDY. It's a time filled with 12-hour workdays and no real personal time. However, each Guard member loves to be a part of this humbling experience that helps each to realize how much they really have.

The school took an even larger step into the 21st century; they acquired access to the Internet. A whole new world to explore, where few ever even leave their reservation, was opened to the school children by a few members of the Utah Air National Guard.

Also during the deployment, the airmen standardized programs on the computers, networked them, and gave the children much improved access to

the World Wide Web.

A phone system was also installed so each building of the school could call the office instead of leaving the classroom to do necessary business.

Many children travel 50 to 60 miles on a Monday and live in dormitories for the week, just so they can receive schooling in everything from mathematics to the Navajo language.

The Guard members shared some valuable and precious time in the Navajo culture and expressed their thoughts and feelings regarding the military and the world outside of the reservation. The children enjoyed seeing a culture and people who are not often seen in their world, and in return they presented their culture and their dances.

The school is a part of the Bureau of Indian Affairs which is jointly administered by the federal government and the tribal council, which makes them eligible to receive excess government computers.

The next scheduled visit to the school is in May.



Students of the T'iis Nazbas Community School rush around their teacher as they head toward the lunch room.

# BRIDGING THE GAP

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Brad Leiter / 151st Air Refueling Wing



Tech. Sgt. Dave Fernelius verifies new phone connections, Tech. Sgt. Dean Peterson enjoys lunch with the children, children give high fives to the members of the comm team and Staff Sgt. Crystal Carsey searches for computer parts.