HONORING OUR STEPS

NDI NEW MEXICO’S COMMITMENT TO NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS
New Mexico is the ancestral home for many Native Peoples for whom dance, song and ritual has always been a part of their heritage and cultures. These traditions instill respect for their histories, ancestors and the land. NDI New Mexico programs also embrace similar tenets through the Core Four: discipline, honor, perseverance and confidence.

NDI New Mexico is committed to serving Native American students and communities. This year, approximately 12% of our students are in programs at Dulce, Shiprock, Magdalena, Albuquerque, Santa Fe and the pueblos of Zia, Ohkay Owingeh, Pojoaque, Tesuque and Jemez. Luci Tapahonso, Inaugural Navajo Nation Poet Laureate, and NDI New Mexico Board member first witnessed at a community performance in her hometown of Shiprock. The joyful showcasing of student achievement in front of families, community, and peers inspired her to expand awareness and funding opportunities through the creation of her initiative, Honoring Our Steps.

“The gymnasium was packed, before and after the show people were shaking hands, greeting and hugging each other all amid much laughter and excitement. The audience ranged from newborns in cradleboards to siblings of all ages as well as aunties, uncles, parents, and grandparents. The event was a celebratory reunion, and the students were the stars!”

– Luci Tapahonso

We value partnerships and seek to understand how our programs can help meet community goals focused on the development, quality of life, academic achievement, and health of young people. Honoring our Steps current funding partners include individual donors, The Continuous Pathways Foundation, Innovate + Educate, Santa Fe Public Schools Native American Student Services, the Department of Health, United Way of Central New Mexico and the Sheila Fortune Foundation.
When North Artistic Director Leslie Stamper wanted to write a show about American roots music, she felt it important to share the voice of our most deeply rooted music and culture - that of Native America.

This led her to reach out to Rulan Tangen, (pictured left), choreographer and director of Dancing Earth, a world-renowned contemporary dance company based in Santa Fe giving voice to an indigenous worldview that also showcases contemporary Native performing artists. (dancingearth.org)

FUN FACTS: Rulan was an instructor with our programs and remembers with particular fondness teaching at our residency in Dulce. There she met a nine-year old girl ...
As an organization dedicated to culture and collaboration, NDI New Mexico values and supports professional performing artists. We strongly believe in fostering creative experiences for our students through work with local artists, bringing an authentic voice to themes we explore.

Both cultural artists have a connection to NDI New Mexico. Rulan was an instructor with our programs and remembers with particular fondness teaching at our residency in Dulce. There she met a nine-year old girl, Anne Pesata, who is now grown up and a member of Rulan’s dance company. Ehren was intrigued by the collaboration in part due to a memory he had as a child of watching an NDI New Mexico performance and wishing he had a performing arts program in his school. Today, as a professional artist and educator, Ehren strongly believes in creating access to the arts for young people and giving voice to a modern Native cultural identity in his home state.

This heartfelt collaboration led to the creation of an extraordinary piece of music and choreography, Honoring Earth. SWAT students in Santa Fe, and Outreach students at Ohkay Owingeh Community School will perform the piece in our newest show, Roots Revival this May!