



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **IWSH Supports DigDeep Emergency Water Delivery Effort on Navajo Nation**

**Washington, D.C. (May 7, 2020)** — The International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH) has announced a financial donation to DigDeep's ongoing efforts to provide safe, potable water to the Navajo Nation in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

DigDeep is distributing 248,000 gallons of bottled Arrowhead Mountain Spring Water to approximately 16 different sites across Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, provided as emergency relief to the Navajo Nation by Nestlé Waters North America. IWSH's financial donation will be used to support local delivery teams and volunteers who have stepped up to help transport water "the last mile" to elders, those infected and under quarantine, and people without personal transportation.

"It has been a big transition for us to go from doing long-term water access projects to relief work, but we are still committed to carrying out our mission of getting drinking water to families on the Navajo Nation, which is one of the most critical needs during this pandemic," said Emma Robbins, DigDeep Navajo Water Project Director. "Receiving this generous donation from IWSH will allow us to continue this work and will go a very long way toward keeping those on the Nation safe and healthy. We are fortunate to partner with IWSH once again, and with all the on-the-ground public health workers, volunteers, and the tribal government to make this happen."

The actions of DigDeep and its team in the Navajo Nation at this time are bought in sharper focus as National Drinking Water Week is observed across the United States, from May 3-9. #DrinkingWaterWeek is an initiative of the American Water Works Association, recognizing the vital role water plays in our daily lives.

The Navajo Nation remains one of the most water-poor areas of the United States. A population of approximately 175,000 people spread out across a vast and often remote area of 27,000 square miles, Navajo are 67 times more likely than other Americans to live without indoor plumbing, running water or a toilet. During the coronavirus pandemic — during which time handwashing has been continually highlighted as vital to preventing the spread of COVID-19 — the reservation is experiencing the third-highest rate of COVID-19 cases per capita among all American states and territories, behind only New York and New Jersey.

"The daily struggle of the Navajo people, in terms of their lack of access to safe water and adequate sanitation, is heartbreaking," said Jed Scheuermann, IWSH North American Project Director. "The situation of the current pandemic is making things impossible, for far too many. Through our previous IWSH-DigDeep initiatives, I've seen first-hand how we can help give the Navajo a fighting chance to change this horrific reality. Hopefully, this latest water delivery effort will be another significant action. Huge thanks to the IWSH network of donors and sponsors for their continued support at this time."

IWSH has collaborated with the DigDeep Navajo Water Project since June 2018, when the organizations joined forces to launch the first Community Plumbing Challenge program in the United States. So far, this initiative has delivered plumbing outreach projects for households in the Baca-Prewitt, N.M., and Navajo Mountain, Arizona, areas of the reservation.

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