

Birdena Sanchez

What position are you vying for? Councilmember

Marital Status: Single with Significant Other Garry Sanchez. Sons Paul & Daniel, Daughter-in-law Cystal, and Granddaughter Taya

Clans: Donashi:kwe, and K'o:loda:kwe 'a:wan cha:le

Education:

- 1971 Zuni High School Graduate
- 1976 Associate Degree in Science/Nursing
- 1992 Certified Diabetes Educator

Career Experience:

- 30 years of Federal service as Registered Nurse with Specialty as a Certified Diabetes Educator. Retired in 2007 from Federal Service
- Worked as an ICU nurse at RMCH and Las Cruces, and Nursing Homes in Gallup and Albuquerque. Retired from career as Nurse in 2011
- 2011-2014 Served as Zuni Tribal Councilwoman
- 2015-2018 Served as Lt. Governor for Zuni Pueblo. Served as a member on the Pueblo Governors Health Board
- 2019 to present Tribal Liaison for Western Sky Community Care, a NM State Medicaid Organization
- Presently a Tribal Advisory Board Member with the Cancer Genome Sequencing Project under the direction of Cheryl Willman, Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center/ UNM

Leadership Experience:

- As a Nurse and an Educator able to think independently and lead in situations for the best outcome. Obstetric Department Supervisor.
- In collaboration with other members of Pueblo Governor's Health Board worked projects and assignments designated by the Pueblo Governors.
- As Councilwoman worked on land issues. Independently researched the history of ownership initiate meeting between parties, and presented the finding to the Council for a final decision,
- Represented Zuni Tribe on the National Diabetes Committee to seek funding at the Congressional level and determine Budget Formulation for National Diabetes Programs.
- Represented Albuquerque IHS Area in meeting with the IHS Director on Budget Formulation
- Represented Albuquerque IHS Area LIUNA Union in national negotiations for a National Union Contract between IHS and LIUNA.
- Mainly I can think independently and make decisions based on information for what is good for the Zuni Community without influence.
- A teacher as a mother, Hotda, Wowo and a Zuni female

Holistic: Please state your traditional and culture values, beliefs, and philosophy:

- "To put everything behind you and move on". This is a fundamental teaching that is taught by our elders and religious leaders which as Zuni People we need to take into our hearts and practice. This saying determines if we are able to put aside our differences.
- Respect your elders and each other as a community and people.
- Listen when a person is speaking and hear the individual out and be patience even though you might disagree.
- I was given this advice by my mother at the start of my nursing career. She said: "As a community servant give the individual seeking your services the time and respect even if the individual does not like you or vice versa".
- I come from a family that are the caretakers for our Cha:le Shalako and the Ashiwani so I have from an early age learned the traditional roles associated with the religious obligations.
- I believe as Zuni People we need to look at what is leading to the high rate of social issues within our community. One value that we have totally forgotten is how to talk to each other. As a Council member this is so important in order accomplish what will benefit our People.
- Prayer and believing in the higher being.
- Teach our children our Zuni language. Our prayers, dances and religion is based on our language and is the core of who we are.

Year 2022 is the State and County election year: Do you feel it is important for the Zuni tribe to participate in the process?

- Yes
- Any election year is important not only as a Tribe but individually to make sure we elect the individuals that will help the Tribe. We as the Zuni Tribe depend on Federal and State funding for our programs. We must make sure the individual elected continue to support the Tribe and as a Tribe we must also continue to advocate to these elected individuals the needs of our Tribes. This is an ongoing process.

If you are elected to the position you are vying for, what is the vision or aspirations do you have for your community? As for the Tribe?

- I feel you cannot differentiate the Community and the Tribe. As Zuni People a decision made affect both simultaneously. What is accomplished by Council affects both the community and Tribe.
- Western Sky Community Care presented to this present Council a plan for a Tribally owned Non-Emergency Medical transport. The tribe already has a transit program which can take on this project. This will increase employment, revenue for the Tribe through Medicaid Medicare dollars and provide better transportation for our community. It will keep the revenue within the Tribe versus exporting revenue to outside transport companies. I want to pursue this.
- Our community roads within the main village need much needed improvements. This means looking at plans/funding allocated and making revisions by working with Tribal Roads Department. It is doable.

- Revisit the idea and research resources of a Rehabilitation/treatment center. This is in the same line regarding our homelessness and families that are displaced.
- Our community is in the higher bracket of what is considered poverty. We must look at the rents for low cost housing and why it's based on the fair market value of the Gallup population? Working with Housing Program collaboratively rather than adversely.
- Work with our Financial Advisers and Investors for a better or improved retirement plan allowing better benefits for employees looking at retirement and opening positions allowing our younger community the opportunity for employment.
- Continued projects to be carried on even though Administrations change every four years.
- Working and Communicating with all Tribal Programs on a positive and professional level.
- Most importantly a Council that works together even though opinions might differ. After all an elected Council is elected by the People and for the People.

Elakwa

