

**2014 National Medal Winner: Octavia Fellin Public Library  
Maria Reyes, Community Member Video**

*[Maria introduces herself in her native Navajo language for 8 seconds]*

Hello my name is Maria Reyes, and I just introduced myself in my Navajo language. I am currently residing on the Navajo reservation in a rural area known as Pinos, New Mexico. In my community we have limited resources. Due to limited resources I've always used the public library to meet resources and necessities that I needed to conduct research papers and projects that I had to fulfill the assignments that I had to do throughout high school and because of the resources that were provided by the library, such as the Internet and being able to go to the library and use a book free of charge and use services free of charge really helped and maintained my standing in my education and made me realize that if I do seek outside sources that I could achieve what I needed to. And I remember conducting my first research paper, which was on Pearl Harbor. I had little information about Pearl Harbor, so I asked my mom to bring me in to Gallup to the public library to conduct my research, and I learned a lot, and spending all that time there in the library, I realized there's other topics I could research free of charge, and I indulged in all the books that I could find on topics that I liked. I also remember the library having an area for the Southwest and that really intrigued me because I was a big fan of Tony Hillerman and we didn't have the financial resources to buy all the novels, so I would checkout the Tony Hillerman novels or read what I could at the public library, so it has really helped and maintain a certain type of liability and asset to the community, as well as to myself. And now as a single parent I bring my children to the children's library for them to attend events such as story time, and I remember attending an event that had the Cat in the Hat theme, which my two little boys really enjoyed and it's really helped the community realize there are resources if you just seek them. I'm very thankful for the public library and all the life skills that I've learned throughout the years and I am more thankful that it's still around and that my kids can partake in such a system that will strengthen not only their personal but also their educational skills at a great level, and I hope to just see more accomplishments from the community as a whole.