

For immediate release
Thursday, Feb. 27, 1975

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

Mrs. Ford will accept a hand-woven Indian rug from 18-year-old Viola Hovel, a Navajo who attends a school for retarded children at Coyote Canyon, Brimhall, New Mexico. The presentation will be at 1 p.m. in the White House Map Room.

Miss Hovel will make the presentation on behalf of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hovel, also of Brimhall. Mr. Hovel is president of the Hope for Children Association, a group of Navajos who are parents of mentally handicapped children. It is one of the first such Indian groups in the country.

Miss Hovel attends the Navajo Children's Rehabilitation Center Inc. Started two years ago, it has an enrollment of 19 Navajo young people between the ages of 12-21 years. The students are from widely scattered communities in northeastern New Mexico, and for most, this is the first school program they have attended.

The purpose of the Coyote Canyon program is to prepare mentally handicapped children to deal with practical problems in their isolated rural communities, while making Navajo culture an integral part of the program. The Bureau of Indian Affairs provides assistance to the school, and the Foster Grandparents Program is also involved (retirees from the area take a special interest in the students.)

Miss Hovel developed her weaving skills under Mrs. Norma Perry, a Navajo from Coyote Canyon who is a skilled weaver and a member of Foster Grandparents.

Included in the presentation are Mr. and Mrs. Hovel; Mrs. Perry; Sophie Thompson, social worker; Fred Krause, executive director of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation (PCMR); and other PCMR officials.

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