Today is National Navajo Code Talkers Day - a day to honor the group of U.S. Marines who created an unbreakable secret code credited with helping the U.S. win World War II.

Peter MacDonald Sr. is one of only three surviving Navajo code talkers in the world. He is also the former leader of the Navajo Nation.

MacDonald stopped by Mayo Clinic to share about his defining chapter in American history. He also made a personal plea for improving access to high quality healthcare for people in his homeland, which he hopes will be part of his legacy.

"Start talking to each other in Navajo code, they will not know what in the world you are talking about."

At 94 years old, Peter MacDonald is the youngest of only three Navajo code talkers alive today. He told a group gathered at Mayo Clinic in Phoenix, Arizona, how the Navajo language was used to create an unbreakable secret code used by the U.S. during World War II.

"The enemy never understood it, he said. We never understood it either. But it works. Send us some more Navajos."

In addition to preserving the rich history of the code talkers, today MacDonald is also working to help increase access to high quality healthcare for indigenous communities.

"A lot of illnesses on Navajo, like diabetes. It's this high as opposed to what's in the country which is this low."

Silena Thomas was born and raised on the Navajo Reservation. She now works for Mayo Clinic in a new program aimed at helping connect patients in Indigenous communities with lifesaving organ transplants.

"It feels like home. It feels like I'm talking to my mom or my grandma."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peter MacDonald, Sr.</th>
<th>Patient outreach navigator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Navajo code talker</td>
<td>Mayo Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silena Thomas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thomas and MacDonald, from different generations, today, unified in their mission. For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Marty Velasco Hames.