

Newsletter

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CEO REPORT - December, 2024

Selina De La Pena, CEO
of Fresno American
Indian Health Project

Judges Dinner: Honoring Indian Health Welfare and Foster Youth

On December 17, 2024, FAIHP had the privilege of being a part of the Judges Dinner at the Chukchansi Resort and Casino. This special gathering brought together advocates, leaders, and community members to focus on the vital issues of Indian Health Welfare and foster youth. The evening was a reminder of the incredible power of shared stories and collective action in shaping brighter futures. Our Board Secretary, Janet Bill, delivered a stirring keynote address that highlighted the importance of community and the enduring commitment to supporting our youth. Her words inspired hope and called on all of us to continue building a network of care and compassion.

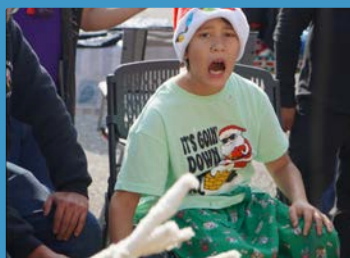
Adding a personal touch, Board Member Bobby Martin shared his journey of resilience and transformation. His heartfelt story of overcoming life's hardships and finding purpose as an artist moved everyone in attendance. Bobby's message was a powerful testament to the strength of the human spirit and the beauty that can emerge from struggle.

We are profoundly grateful to everyone who dedicates themselves to these critical causes. Your tireless efforts are making a lasting difference in the lives of foster youth and in the well-being of our communities. It is a privilege to work alongside such passionate and determined individuals. FAIHP's recognition during the evening was a humbling reminder of the collective impact we all share. Together, we are creating a legacy of care and support that will continue to inspire change for years to come.

As we reflect on this meaningful event and the close of 2024, we are filled with gratitude and renewed purpose. Let us carry the lessons of this evening into the year ahead, guided by hope, unity, and the shared belief that we can make a difference.



Community Highlights



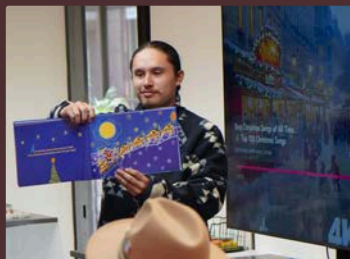
The month of December started off with our Winter Native Marketplace! Native artists gathered to share their talents, and the Sacred Circle drum shared songs. We had a wonderful turnout and appreciate all of the community who were able to join us!



Our Community Garden hosted its first Live Wreath Making workshop, where participants were provided several types of fragrant plants (Cedar, Pine, Fir), as well as decor and LOTS of holiday spirit! We loved how each wreath was unique to the crafter!



Our Native Youth Council had a holiday themed meeting, filled with fun and games! We are so grateful to the young leaders of the FAIHP community who work hard and play hard all year!



Every year, our Clubhouse families and WISE elders come together to celebrate the season at our annual CLUBWISE event. This year, we created magical snow globes and enjoyed a heartwarming holiday storytelling session.

CLUBWISE is one of FAIHP's most cherished traditions, bringing generations together to share joy, creativity, and connection. 2024's event was truly unforgettable!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Monday:

- 9am-12pm
Psychoeducation and
Process Group (SUDS
Services)
- 1pm Hatha Yoga

Tuesday:

- 5:30pm Beading

Wednesday:

- 3pm Tai Chi
- 12 pm Phoenix Group (1st
and last Wed monthly)
- 5:30pm Sacred Circle

Thursday:

- 12-2pm WISE Elder
Support Group (2nd
and 4th Thursday)
- 5-7:30pm Hatha Yoga

Friday:

- 10am Tai Chi
- 12pm-1pm
Wellbriety Meeting

Monthly Events

Nutrition and Wellness Class
Third Thursday Monthly
January 16th 12pm-2pm

**Native American Young Adult
Committee (NAYAC)**
January 16th
6pm-8pm

No Talking2Spirit January 2025

Holiday Closures

**FAIHP Offices will be
CLOSED:**

January 1st, 2025

January 20th, 2025

**If a program falls on a holiday,
the program will be cancelled.**



YOUTH DEPARTMENT NEWS

Clubhouse finished the year with lots of festivities. Our American Indian Education Center staff made leather stockings and shared holiday stories with the youth.

Our Suicide Prevention Team painted plates and mugs with the youth in preparation for the holidays and to practice art expression. The last week before vacation the youth had a Christmas party where they played a number of games, played white elephant and shared a meal.

Also in December Clubhouse worked with the Native Wellness's WISE group for ClubWISE where the elders and Clubhouse families came together to share a meal and make snow globes. Daughters and Sons of Tradition had a Christmas party as well. They played games and watched Christmas movies.

We hope everyone had great holidays and an amazing end to the new year. We look forward to what this new year will bring.

Contact us regarding Clubhouse, Homework Help, or Sons of Daughters of Tradition

559-320-0490 (press 4 for Youth Services)



Nutrition

Maintain a Healthy Body Weight with Diabetes

Submitted By Roberto Couto - MS, RDN - Health Educator II Special Diabetes Program for Indians

Managing Diabetes effectively often involves more than just monitoring blood sugar levels. For many, maintaining a healthy body weight is critical to controlling Diabetes and preventing complications. Achieving and sustaining a healthy weight can help improve insulin sensitivity, lower blood sugar levels, reduce the risk of complications, and enhance overall well-being.

Key Strategies and Insights

1. Understand the Connection Between Weight and Diabetes

Understanding the connection between excess body weight and Diabetes is empowering. Excess body weight, particularly around the abdomen, can make it harder for your body to use insulin effectively, leading to insulin resistance.

2. Focus on a Balanced, Diabetes-Friendly Diet

A healthy eating plan is the cornerstone of weight management with Diabetes. Some key principles include prioritizing low-calorie index (GI) foods, controlling portion sizes, limiting sugars and refined carbohydrates, and incorporating healthy fats.

3. Ensure Regular Physical Activity

Regular exercise plays a crucial role in managing both weight and blood sugar levels and increases insulin sensitivity.

4. Manage Stress and Sleep

Stress and poor sleep can disrupt hormones that regulate appetite and blood sugar, such as cortisol and insulin. Practice stress management techniques like meditation, yoga, or deep breathing, and aim for 7-9 hours of sleep each night.

5. Work with Healthcare Professionals

Maintaining a healthy weight with Diabetes often requires personalized care. Regular consultations with Dietitians or Diabetes educators can provide tailored advice and support.



Family Spirit

Keeping Culture Alive: Cradleboards

Submitted By: Felicia Batts, MPH

Cradleboards hold a special place in various Indigenous cultures of North America, serving not just as baby carriers, but as profound symbols of care, tradition, and community. Here at FAIHP, we have the Family Spirit Program which is a Case Management/Home Visitation Program for pregnant women and small children under 3 years of age. As a cultural based program, dedicating space for a review of traditional practices and learning about what options our clients prefer are an important part of our work.

Cradleboards are traditional baby carriers and are designed to provide comfort and safety for infants, allowing mothers to carry their babies on their backs as they went about daily activities. Beyond their practical use, cradleboards are often intricately decorated with beads, quills, and other adornments, reflecting the artistic heritage and cultural values of the community. If all materials are gathered and ready for materials, the first basket can be completed in a little over a week.

This one was created by Ms. Connie Atwell who credits her teacher Ms. Phyllis Hunter for sharing her knowledge and dedication to maintaining our cultural heritage.

Materials for this basket were harvested from the Sierra Nevada Foothills here in Fresno County. These materials include fresh shoots gathered in the Fall from the sour berry bush (ta-ka-tee-aub) and red bud bush (ta-ka-aub). Chaparral (hoo-moo-naub) was used for the bracers, around the edges and the hoop.

Traditionally, the sex is not denoted in the design for a newborn's first basket (pah-sahk) and is used until the second basket is weaved. The second basket (hoop) is a double back full-sized cradle board/baby basket, the sex of the baby will have diamonds or zig zags for a girl and arrows chevrons (< >) or diagonal lines (/ \) for a boy.

Connie and her family gathered all the materials to make the first basket pictured here. Special thanks to Ms. Kimberly Taylor for the hand-woven belt.



"We lost so much during colonization; I want to contribute to keeping our culture alive for future generations to come. What the baskets and the swaddling do is mimic the baby being in the mother's womb, giving the baby comfort and security. These baskets are crucial to keeping our culture alive. There is truly something special, amazing, and magically calming about them". -Phyllis Hunter

She reminds us that cradleboards have traditionally played a significant role in ceremonial practices and rites of passage. They represent the deep connection between the child and their community, conveying a sense of belonging and continuity.

As part of the Family Spirit Program, we currently serve 25 women and 33 children. In 2025, we are looking forward to growing our program and serving more women and children, while sustaining traditional practices with this cultural based program!



NURSES CORNER

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month!

Cervical Cancer is Preventable and treatable
Regular screenings and early detection save lives.
Almost all cervical cancer cases are caused by persistent infections with Human papillomavirus (HPV). Take charge of your health this January!

Why Screenings Matter

- pap smear: Detects abnormal cell changes in the cervix that could develop into cancer.
- HPV test: identifies high risk HPV types that can lead to cervical cancer.

Who needs screening?

- Women aged 21-65 should have regular screenings.
- Frequency depends on age, health history, and test type.
- Ages 21-39 pap smear every 3 years.
- Ages 30-65 pap smear and HPV test every 5 years or pap smear alone every 3 years.

Get Vaccinated

The HPV vaccine is a safe, effective way to prevent cervical cancer. it's recommended for:

- Preteens (11-12)
- Individuals up to age 45 who have not been vaccinated.

Take Action Today!

Schedule your Screening:

Fresno American Indian Health Project
559-320-0490 (option 2 for Medical)
Clinic Hours: Mon-Fri 8:00 AM-5:00 PM
Stay Safe and Healthy This January!



NATIVE WELLNESS

Central Valley New Year's Eve Red Road Pow Wow 2024-2025

Submitted by Deborah Gilleran, CADC II

The Central Valley Red Road Pow Wow featured an important outreach effort to support our community's wellness this year. Our Native Wellness team distributed harm reduction kits at the event, ensuring that those in need have access to essential tools and resources. These kits included harm reduction for the opioid epidemic and education to save our relative's lives in the event of an overdose. The kits are designed to reduce risks and promote health, reflecting our commitment to serving our community in a good way.

In addition to the harm reduction outreach, we were excited to announce that Wellbriety meetings were included in the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting lineup on both days of the Pow Wow.

Wellbriety is a culturally grounded approach to recovery that incorporates Native traditions, spirituality, and healing practices, aligning with AA's core principles.

These were offered hourly and were attended well! Whether our community was beginning their healing journey or continuing to walk the Red Road. The Central Valley Red Road Pow Wow was a celebration of culture and community but also a time for reflection, connection, and healing!

To continue your journey, contact the Native Wellness SUD Department for connection and a place to heal!

dgilleran@faihp.org



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

By Paige Harris, ASW

Happy New Year! As we leave 2024 and welcome 2025, let's reflect on how to cultivate wellness in our lives. How do you want to show up for your family, your friends, your colleagues, and most importantly YOURSELF?

What Is Self Care?

Self-care is the practice of taking an active role in preserving and/or improving one's own wellbeing (Oxford Languages).

Self-care is an act of love toward yourself. It can replenish and renew your ability to function daily, increase capacity to be there for others, and improve your mental and physical wellbeing. I'm sure we have all heard the saying "you cannot give from an empty cup", but let's be honest, we all have tried. You are important and deserve to prioritize your wellness.

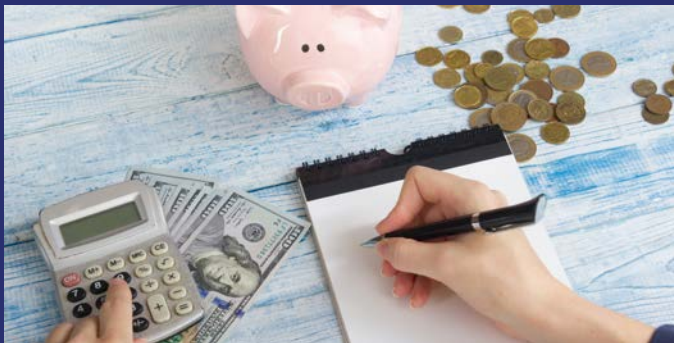
Examples of Ways to Practice Self-Care

Get Those Annual Physicals –

Your physical wellbeing is essential in self-care. Take care of your body so it can continue to take care of you.

Practice Grounding –

Meditation and practicing grounding exercises are a great way to center yourself and calm your mind and body. It can be as easy as finding a guided meditation exercise on YouTube or looking up how to practice the 5-4-3-2-1 technique or progressive muscle relaxation. Grounding can also be journaling and practicing mindfulness. Find what works best for you.



Budgeting –

Finances can be stressful as costs rise. Budgeting is a great way to alleviate some of the stress that comes with managing money.

Seek Counseling –

Sometimes we need a safe space to work through issues and talk about those things that may be difficult to talk about with our loved ones. Counseling can be that safe space for you.



Get Active –

Exercise is a great act of self-care. Whether it's walking, running, bike riding, swimming, going to the gym, or participating workout video; exercise can be a great way to increase energy while improving your mental and physical wellbeing. Being active can also be cleaning, cooking, doing yardwork, and even dancing. How do you want to be active in 2025?



Get Sleep –

Sleep is so important to function daily. Life can make it difficult to get the recommended 8 hours of sleep. Having a good nighttime sleep routine can be helpful in getting quality sleep. Remember, put down the phone, turn off those TV's, and close those eyes.

Spend Time in Nature –

According to the American Psychological Association, enjoying nature is known to improve mood, reduce stress, and decrease anxiety. Spending time in nature can help us slow down and enjoy the beauty that surrounds us.

Stay Connected –

Building a community is a wonderful way to remain connected with those around us. Whether it be family, friends, colleagues, or community members; connection with positive people can improve one's mental and physical health. How do you plan to stay connected to community in 2025?

There are so many ways to practice self-care, as there are just a few examples. In 2025, find what works best for you.

Remember, "Loving yourself is not selfish, it is essential to your wellbeing and the wellbeing of the world" – Yung Pueblo

Physical Activity For Mental Wellness

By Storm Heredia, Peer Mentor

Part of our existence once relied heavily upon our physical capabilities. Whether it was for defense, hunting, gathering or farming; our ancestors needed to be active to continue their livelihoods. Now we no longer are in a constant state of survival. We get to turn our attention elsewhere like our professions, jobs, or school. Yet the truth stands, we need to be active to survive. Our ancestors depended upon it, and so should we. We have a lack of physical activity in our society today. Our tendency to work hard, overindulge and go couch potato is what is leading to not only physical disorders, but mental diseases as well. How often do the majority of Americans get their necessary exercise everyday? The answer is not enough. According to the World Health Organization, the lack of physical activity is considered to cause almost 2 million avoidable deaths per year. The key word being "avoidable." For our individual wellbeing, and that of our family, friends and community, we should strive for a healthier lifestyle.



A little motion for 30 minutes has great benefits. There are various exercises you can do to suffice for this. It does not need to be going for that long run, or doing 100 push ups and sit ups. Physical activity can also be tending to your garden, walking your dog, hiking, dancing, playing sports, or even playing video games that involve physical movement like wii sports. There are various ways to meet your daily quota of physical activity and make it enjoyable. The more enjoyable it is, the more likely you'll continue to do it and better you will feel overtime mentally, physically and spiritually. The benefits of physical activity far outweigh the benefits of momentary comfort. Several longitudinal studies have suggested that an increase in physical activity leads to decreases in anxiety and depression. When you become physically active your body naturally releases feel-good chemicals: serotonin, dopamine, oxytocin and other endorphins. All of which helps to prevent accumulation of stress, and can provide you clarity of mind. Physical activity can drastically improve your lives. You can do it, for your health and for those who come after you. Stay well.

Reference:

Saxena, S., Van Ommeren, M., Tang, K. C., & Armstrong, T. (2005). Mental health benefits of physical activity. *Journal of Mental Health, 14*(5), 445-451.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09638230500270776>

Fresno American Indian Health Project

1551 E Shaw Ave, Suite 139

Fresno, CA 93710

Donation Opportunity

FAIHP is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization and depends on support from the community. All donations are tax-deductible. If you or an individual or business you know would like to make a contribution they may do so by check.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

DONATION AMOUNT: _____

Please make all checks payable to:
Fresno American Indian Health Project
1551 E. Shaw Avenue, Suite 139, Fresno CA 93710.

Our Services Include

- Medical Appointments
- Health Screenings
- Behavioral Health Services
- Alcohol & Drug Prevention
- Health Education Classes
- Case Management
- Transportation
- Health Referrals
- Youth After School Program
- Nutrition Counseling

Our Board of Directors

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Janet Bill - Secretary

Marta Bernadette Alvarez -Treasurer

Dr. Leece Lee Oliver - Board Member

Bobby Von Martin - Board Member

Audrey Osborne - Board Member

Learn more about the board

at www.faihp.org/about-us/board-of-directors

The Board of Directors meets the 4th Tuesday of every month, at 5:30pm. If you'd like to attend the board meeting, contact Kylie Sherman at ksherman@faihp.org or by calling 559-320-0490.

The Fresno American Indian Health Project is a culturally sensitive health access and advocacy program designed to enhance the health and well being of the American Indian community in the City of Fresno, CA. The Health Project provides public health services and access to free & low cost quality health care. The primary program services are medical, behavioral health, comprehensive case management, public health nursing, providing health services and prevention education.