

# Newsletter

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# CEO REPORT - December, 2024

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

As we step into the new year, I'm thrilled to share that we are launching a new five-year strategic plan. This plan will guide our organization toward growth, collaboration, and service excellence. Our priorities include:

**Priority 1:**  
Maintain and Strengthen Operational Sustainability

**Priority 2:**  
Implement a Culturally Integrated Wellness Service Model.

**Priority 3:**  
Increase Care Coordination and Supportive Services

**Priority 4:**  
Improve Quality, Data, System, Capacity Infrastructure to Promote Organizational Effectiveness and Cultural Wellbeing

**Priority 5:**  
Promote Community Connectedness to Support Infrastructure Development

We could not achieve any of this without the unwavering support of our clients, community, staff, and Board of Directors. Your dedication, guidance, and trust inspire us daily and remind us of the important work we are honored to do together.

Exciting progress is underway! Construction for Phase 1 has officially begun, which includes dedicated spaces for Native Wellness and Youth Services. Completion is targeted for Fall 2025. Phase 2 will follow, featuring new administrative and behavioral health spaces, and Phase 3 will include expanded medical facilities. The entire project is expected to be completed by June 2027. These developments reflect our deep commitment to creating spaces that fully serve and uplift our community.



Additionally, FAIHP is honored to have been recognized as a CalAIM Enhanced Care Provider with CalViva. This designation enables us to expand our wrap-around services and enhance care coordination, empowering us to provide even more meaningful support to those we serve.

As we move forward in 2025, we remain deeply grateful to everyone who plays a part in our journey—our clients, who place their trust in us; our community, whose partnership uplifts our mission; our staff, whose passion and hard work drive our success; and our Board, whose vision and leadership ensure our continued growth and impact. Together, we are building a brighter, stronger future.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

# Community Highlights



FAIHP attended the Reedley college event commemorating the Choinumni monument unveiling. We're especially grateful to our board member Audrey Osbourne for the impact she has on the community, and her presence in our work here.



The New Years Red Road Pow Wow was two days of dance, drum, and fun. We thank the pow wow committee for their amazing work putting on this event.



Our first garden event of the season was the open community garden day, coinciding with Michelle's plant talk about black sage. Black sage was propagated by the community who also lent their hands to the garden upkeep!



The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Summits on Harm Reduction in SUD Treatment aimed to reduce stigma and educate SUD treatment providers on the importance of taking a harm-reduction approach to SUD treatment services. This month at the Central Valley Conference, FAIHP's SUD Counselor, Deborah Gilleran, presented best practices for our community regarding GONA principles and Wellbriety, which means being Sober and Well!

# 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)
- 3-5pm Men's Talking Circle
- 5-7:30pm Hatha Yoga

## Friday:

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

## Monthly Events

**Nutrition and Wellness Class**  
**Third Thursday Monthly**  
**February 20, 2025**

**Native American Young Adult  
Committee (NAYAC)**  
**February 20, 2025**  
**6pm-8pm**

**Talking 2Spirit**  
**Friday, February 28th**  
**2:30-5:00pm**

## Holiday Closures

**FAIHP Offices will be  
CLOSED:**

**Monday, February 17th -  
President's Day**

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

**Please check our social media  
accounts or  
[faihp.org/calendar](http://faihp.org/calendar) for the  
latest updates on  
cancellations of programs and  
events.**

# YOUTH DEPARTMENT NEWS



## Spotlight! Talking 2 Spirit

November: Fresno State Queer Talk

In November of last year, the Talking Two Spirit Group was invited by Fresno State's Cross Cultural and Gender Center (CCGC) to serve as panelists at their Queer Talk Discussion Group. During the panel discussion, the group shared with students and faculty about Two Spirit history, identity, and lived experiences.

## December: Monthly Meetup With Special Guest Kristina Padilla

Closing off 2024 in a good way, Talking Two Spirit's December meeting featured Two Spirit Educator, Advocate, Speaker, and Author, Kristina Padilla. Kristina spoke about Two Spirit history, their personal life and professional journey, and their book *Kristina With a K: A Rainbow Person's Journey from Addiction to Recovery* to a group of over 30 attendees.

## January & February: Trip to BAAITS Pow Wow

More recently, FAIHP community members and staff plan to visit the 14th annual Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits (BAAITS) Powwow, which is hosted at San Francisco's Fort Mason Center on February 1st. BAAITS, the community based organization that hosts the Powow, offers culturally relevant activities for LGBT individuals of Native American ancestry. According to their mission, the group aims "to restore and recover the role of Two-Spirit people within the American Indian/First Nations community by creating a forum for the spiritual, cultural and artistic expression of Two-Spirit people."



# Nutrition

## Listen To Your Beating Heart!

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

**Native Americans face significant challenges with higher rates of cardiovascular disease (CVD) due to dietary changes, limited healthcare access, and food insecurity. Nutrition is a powerful tool for improving heart health in our community. Here are some key strategies to keep in mind:**

### Reintroducing and Increasing Traditional Food Consumption

Staple foods like corn, beans, and squash (“The Three Sisters”) provide fiber and vital nutrients. Wild game, fish, berries, and nuts contribute lean protein and omega-3s, supporting healthy cholesterol levels and reducing inflammation while honoring cultural heritage. Make some today!

### Reducing Processed Foods

Due to financial challenges and other reasons, many communities have experienced shifts in diets and are eating more high processed foods, which contributes to increased Heart Problems, such as Cardiovascular Disease. Try limiting these foods and shopping the perimeter of your grocery store.

### Physical Activity

What types of exercise activities interest you? Getting regular exercise such as walking, powwow dancing, or gardening can help to strengthen your heart and serves as a culturally meaningful way to stay connected to the land, community and culture.

### Community Education

Nutrition workshops and cooking classes empower communities to make healthier choices and reclaim their culinary traditions. Join us every month for our Nutrition and Wellness Education Class, especially if you have a health need such as Diabetes, High Blood Pressure or Heart Disease.

Help us to addressing heart health among Native Americans to live longer. By focusing on keeping traditional diets intact and overcoming modern dietary challenges, Native communities can take significant steps towards effectively reducing heart disease and enhancing overall wellness!



REFERENCE: Breathett K;Sims M;Gross M;Jackson EA;Jones EJ;Navas-Acien A;Taylor H;Thomas KL;Howard BV;; (2020, May 18). Cardiovascular Health in American Indians and Alaska Natives: [A scientific statement from the American Heart Association. Circulation.](#)

# Family Spirit

## Program Expansion

Submitted By: Felicia Batts MPH

Thanks to four years of hard work and dedication to serving the Native Community here in Fresno County, we have successfully served over 50 women and children and today our Family Spirit Program is growing and now expanding to Madera County!

Family Spirit is an evidence-based and culturally tailored home visiting intervention delivered by certified community-based Health Educators. This program is an Indigenous solution to supporting caregivers during pregnancy and early childhood. Caregivers gain knowledge and skills to achieve optimum development for their children: physically, cognitively, and emotionally. We can also help support language learning and facilitate self-help resources and services.

As a Family Spirit client here at FAIHP, we will work to:

- ❖ Increase parenting knowledge and skills
- ❖ Address maternal psychosocial risks that could interfere with positive child-rearing
- ❖ Promote optimal physical, cognitive, social/emotional development for children from 0 to 3 years
- ❖ Prepare children for early school success
- ❖ Ensure children get recommended well-child visits and health care
- ❖ Link families to community services to address specific needs
- ❖ Promote parents' and children's life skills and behavioral outcomes across the lifespan

We can provide Home Visits and Telehealth Services and facilitate parent training and support for pregnant women and families with children up to age 3 years old.



Call today and sign up for this Free Program  
for Native Families and Native Children

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**Nereida Boyle, MPH**  
**Health Education Manager**  
**559.320.0490**

FAIHP is a contracted CalAIM Provider!  
Call us to see if you qualify for our Case Management Services!

# NURSES CORNER

February 2025: Building a Healthier Community Together

**At Fresno American Indian health Project**, we are dedicated to keeping our community healthy and strong. February is a great time to focus on your health, with important awareness campaigns that remind us all to prioritize wellness.

- **American Heart Month:** Your heart is the foundation of a healthy life. Take steps to protect it with regular check-ups, heart healthy foods, and staying active. Let's work together to prevent heart disease in our community.
- **National Children's Dental Health Month:** Healthy smiles start young! Encourage your children to brush, floss, and visit the dentist regularly for strong teeth and better overall health.
- **Cancer Prevention Month:** Prevention is key. Regular screening and healthy lifestyle choices can help reduce cancer risks. We're here to support you with resources and care.



**Take charge of your health with FAIHP!**

We invite you to make your health a priority this month. If you're not yet an established patient, now is the perfect time to join us. Our clinic is here to provide compassionate care and support for every member of our community

**Make your appointment today:**

1551 E Shaw Ave. Fresno. 559-320-0490 (option 2 for the medical clinic)  
Together, we can create a healthier future for ourselves and our families. Whether you need a check-up, preventive care, or support for a specific health concern, we're here for you



# NATIVE WELLNESS

## Spending Plan 101

Submitted by Jaciel Salas, Housing Case Manager

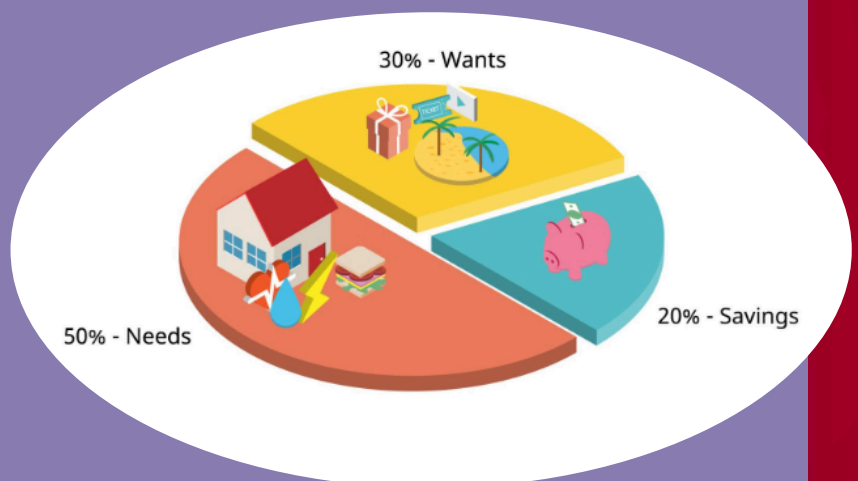
It's the beginning of the year which is a perfect time to start planning for the future. Creating a spending plan is one way to manage your money, support savings, and help your future. **By following simple guidelines like the 50-30-20 rule**, you can better manage your finances. This is just a guide and can be changed to better meet your needs. The important step here is breaking down spending habits into three main categories.

The first portion of the 50-30-20 rule is the **50% for needs**. Needs are essential expenses like rent, utilities, groceries, insurance, and transportation. These are the things you can't avoid or delay, and they should take up half of your income. While it might seem like a lot, this portion ensures that your basic life requirements are met.

**Next, 30% is for your wants.** Wants are non-essential items that enhance your quality of life but aren't necessary for survival. This includes things like dining out, entertainment, vacations, and shopping for clothes or gadgets. Allocating 30% for wants allows you to enjoy life without neglecting your financial priorities like bills. By keeping this portion in check, you can prevent overspending and make room for both enjoyment and savings.

**Finally, 20% of your income should go toward savings and debt repayment.** This part of your spending plan is crucial for building your financial future. It can be directed towards building an emergency fund, investing for retirement, or paying off any outstanding debts. This habit helps ensure that you're not only covering your immediate needs but also securing long-term financial health.

The 50-30-20 rule is a flexible, straightforward way to manage your spending plan. It encourages a balanced approach to budgeting, helping you take care of your present while investing in your future.



# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

## Let's Play! National Play Therapy Week

By: Amber Molina, LCSW, Registered Play Therapist

Did you know during the month of February, play therapists from around the world celebrate International Play Therapy Week? It is February 2-8, 2025. Association for Play Therapy defines play therapy as "the systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained play therapists use the therapeutic powers of play to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development."

### Why play therapy?

- Play therapy can help a child express their emotions, communicate with others, and learn healthy behaviors. Often times, children have difficulty expressing their feelings; which often results in temper tantrums, arguing, or withdrawal. Play therapy is a healthy approach for children to utilize toys as their words and allow others to peek into their world through the power of play.

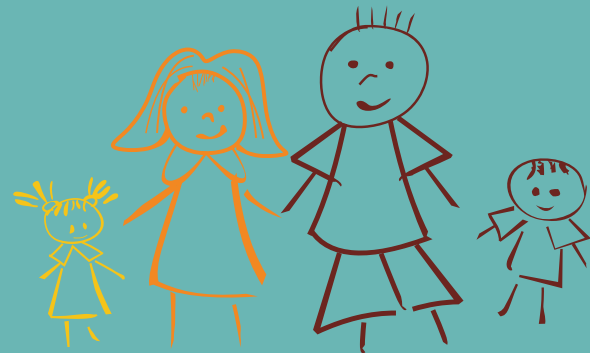


### How does play therapy work?

- Play therapy can often help a child deal with their emotions, find resolutions to their problems, and cope with various challenges they may be facing (bullying, low self-esteem, grief and loss, divorce, anxiety, depression, trauma, etc.). Play therapy is not only helpful for young children, but teenagers and adults can also benefit from it.

### Can my family also be involved?

- YES! Families play a very crucial role in the play therapy process with a child. Challenges that a child is facing can often affect the family or may have been caused by a family disturbance. Therefore, it is important to include the immediate family in the child's healing process and build connectedness for future support.



Remember, talking about our feelings can be challenging, especially for children. Through play therapy, children have an outlet to express themselves in a safe environment. It allows for growth and support. If you are interested in seeking therapy services for you or your family, please contact FAIHP for more information, we'd love to meet you!

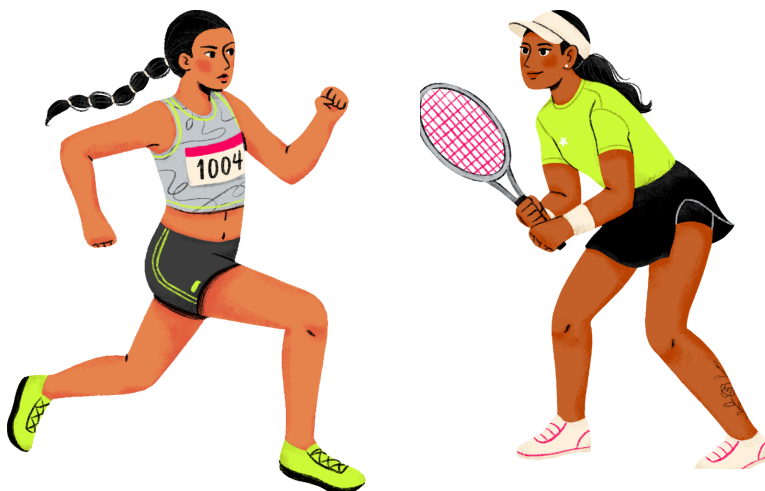
# Mental Wellness for Student Athletes

By Storm Heredia, Peer Mentor



As a student-athlete you deal with different stressors than the average person. Having to juggle your passion for the sports you play, maintain school work load, and balance everything else in life is no doubt difficult to do. Sometimes you're so tired and ill motivated to do anything after training. I understand completely. I was once a student-athlete myself. However, this only leads to accumulated stress and pressure. That weight can easily take you to rock-bottom, affecting not only your general well-being, but sport's performance as well. It may feel unfair at times. Yet this is the life you live, and to complain is to submit to the challenge(s) creator presented to you. Instead, you should accept these hardships presented in your life, and frame them as opportunities to learn what you're capable of.

Being a student-athlete takes immense discipline. The focus and determination you put into your training is great! But discipline sometimes can leave you feeling dull, or like you have no life. In times of great discipline, remember you can still enjoy things in life. Think of what coping strategies outside of sports and school that help bring you relaxation? Whatever it is, make sure to hold onto it with a firm grip, especially in the thick of an intense season. Enjoy that moment with friends and family, enjoy your favorite TV show, enjoy an extra nap in your day. If you are overcome with stress, hardship, anxiety, fear, or frustration, remember to take care of yourself. If you need to take a step back and say "I need to focus on my own health and wellbeing first" then do so. It is better to live a life worth living, than one feeling unworthy to live.



For friends and family of a student-athlete, if it seems to you that your friend or family member is struggling, saying negative things about themselves, or being especially quiet or reserved than usual, try giving a check up on them. Ask them questions like "I feel like you haven't been yourself lately, are you doing okay?" or "Would you want to talk about anything? I'm here for you." Sometimes as a student-athlete we build a notion that our mental toughness coincides with our ability to neglect our inner negative thoughts. We think we don't need to voice them because if we do it'll make us weak, rather we can push through the thick of it! Those inner thoughts can and will lead to a snowball effect of mental suffering, depression even suicidal thoughts if they are not made aware of and managed.

For student-athletes, trust to speak out your feelings. It is okay to seek help when you're overwhelmed. Check in with your coach, therapist, sports psychologist, friend, and/or parent. It is okay. You will become that much wiser from it. One day, you may even help another student-athlete going through the same issue(s) you did. First, it takes you to live through the experience to teach from it. Give yourself credit, you are doing your best and that's all anyone can ask for. Keep up the good work but most importantly, stay well.

Reference:  
Student Athlete Suicide Prevention Archives - Take Action for Mental Health. (n.d.). Take Action for Mental Health.  
<https://takeaction4mh.com/toolkit-categories/student-athlete-suicide-prevention-toolkit/>

## 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

Pam Coronado - Chair

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Learn more about the board

at [www.faihp.org/about-us/board-of-directors](http://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](mailto: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.