



# FAIHP

Fresno American Indian Health Project

Serving The Native Community Since 2007

MARCH • 2024

**SPRING IS  
HERE!**

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## CEO REPORT- Selina De La Peña

### MARCH News

Dear FAIHP Community,

In February we had the honor to help Big Sandy Rancheria open the new Community Resource Center in Auberry Ca. This collaboration with FAIHP will offer a variety of our prevention services to the mountain communities. Special thanks to Liz Kipp, Chairwoman of BSR, the Tribal Council and the FAIHP team for all of your efforts in expanding services to the Auberry Community.



In February, we provided some great workshops and classes like the White Root Dig at Fresno State which had over 60 participants, Garden Talk seminar, Poetry Workshop with Shane Lara, Youth Karate, Bobby Martin Paint Night, and Arthop Outreach. Our ongoing classes included; Fatherhood Is Sacred, Bi-weekly Yoga, Adult Drum Circle, Youth Drum Circle and more, visit the calendar section of our website to find more information. We are excited that we will be offering some of these types of classes and programs at the new Community Resource Center in Auberry.



### **\*\*Save the Date: 2nd Annual 5K Spirit Run - April 27th:\*\* Registration is Open**

In the spirit of Unity, we are thrilled to announce the 2nd Annual 5K Spirit Run on April 27th. This event is not only a fun and fitness-filled day but also a chance for our community to come together and strengthen the bonds that make FAIHP so special. We invite each of you to mark your calendars and join us for this exciting occasion.

Spring is a time for growth and hope and we are so blessed to be able to grow and serve this vibrant community!

Warm regards,





# Youth Happenings

For the month of February, Clubhouse youth read “The Friendship Makers” for our monthly Reading Circle activity. “The Friendship Makers” is a contemporary story for American Indian and Alaska Native children that celebrates some of the shared values and traditions across many Tribal Communities which help create safe, stable, nurturing environments and relationships for youth. The youth also made beaded key chains as a cultural activity to go along with the story.

*“Be kind. Care for others. Everyone is worthy of love.”*



Also, the Sons of Tradition youth group attended the Cultural Burn Ceremony and Workshop with the Honorable Ron Goode of the North Fork Mono Tribe. The youth shared songs during the morning ceremony and they learned to take care of the land with cultural fire.





# SPRING SEASON AND MENTAL HEALTH

by Alma Santiago

The changing of the seasons and the start of the warmer months are generally associated with growth, rebirth, and a frenzy of flowers pushing out of the barren, thawing soil. We see shining faces and blue skies across all media platforms. However, the changing of the seasons is not the end-all cure for seasonal depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. In fact, the spring and early summer months see the highest rates of suicide, and many people experience increased depression and anxiety. Why does this happen, and what are some steps we can take to make it through the changing of the seasons?

Why does spring affect mental health?

One of the major reasons people may feel more depressed and anxious in the springtime is simply because of change. For some people, change feels like an exciting opportunity, while others may feel an intense instability in their lives and can produce overwhelming anxiety.

Springtime is also associated with major life events and special occasions, often associated with big parties, social events, and family interactions, which may trigger intense feelings of anxiety. Memories of these events may also produce feelings of deep nostalgia or melancholy, potentially triggering depressive thoughts. Other factors may be physiological, such as experiencing spring allergies where our immune systems are working twice as hard. Our bodies and our minds might feel helplessly depleted during the height of hay fever. Hormones, specifically melatonin, might also contribute to mood changes in the springtime. This hormone plays a vital role in regulating our sleep cycles, and any change in this system may produce sleep problems or grogginess, which is never beneficial to our mental health.

What can you do to make it through the spring?

Find a routine. Despite the changes spring might bring, try to find at least one consistent activity for your week to look forward to. This could look like Monday evening walks with your dog, a Friday lunch with friends, or a few dedicated hours to self-care each Sunday.

Focus on sleep. While this is much easier said than done, try to prioritize sleep! Set two alarms, one that tells you to GO TO BED, and one that tells you to WAKE UP. Try to keep it consistent throughout the week.

Ask for help— If you know spring is a difficult time for you, reach out to friends or family for a support system. Seek out a therapist or treatment to help you process your feelings.

Reference: CharlieHealth.com





# Move More – Sit Less

Did you know that sitting for more than seven or eight hours a day can decrease muscle strength and increase the risk of diabetes and blood clots over time?

We do most of our sitting at work – at a desk or in our vehicle. And we also sit a lot at home – watching TV or working virtually.

Here are some tips from the Indian Health Service on how to interrupt sitting every 30 to 60 minutes.

- ◆ Moving more helps to lower blood sugar levels for people with diabetes.

- ◆ Moving helps to boost circulation and increase muscle strength.



- ◆ Moving helps to reduce stress and improves mental health.

- ◆ Moving helps to improve overall quality of life.

## PET SAFETY FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

### Health Benefits of Pet Ownership

Our animal companions are wonderful as they offer comfort and unconditional love. There are additional health benefits associated with pet ownership such as support for overall mental health; increased opportunities for exercise; decreased stress levels; increased social support; decreased blood pressure; cholesterol levels; and triglyceride levels. Pets help support the development of young children because it creates a connection that helps increase emotional and social skills .



### Keep Infants and Children Healthy

It is essential to keep children healthy around animals as children under 5 years are more likely to get sick from germs that animals carry. Infants and children have weaker immune systems as they are still developing and lack persistent hygiene since they are less likely to wash their hands well and often.

### Steps to Keep Infants and Children Healthy Around Animals

Here are some ways to ensure your infant and children remain healthy around your pets:

1. Always supervise children when around animals
2. Always thoroughly wash children's hands with soap and water right after being around animals
3. Never allow children to put their hands, or other objects into their mouths after touching animals
4. Never allow children to kiss animals
5. Pay attention to objects, like pacifiers, as they may fall on dirty surfaces and then be placed in an infant's mouth.
6. Wash your hands before breastfeeding and preparing baby formula
7. Keep children away from animals while they are eating and sleeping

#### Resources:

[Infants and Young Children | Healthy Pets, Healthy People | CDC](#)  
[Kids and Pet Safety Rules | Life with Pets | Blog | Animal League](#)  
[The Power of Pets | NIH News in Health](#)

### Do you have Questions about this topic?

The FAIHP Family Spirit Program is here to help! This program is for pregnant women and parents/caregivers of Native Children under the age of 3 years. To learn more please call FAIHP at (559) 320-0490 to speak to our Health Educator.



# Exercises for Mental Wellness

## Self-Love is Community Love



**PATHS  
(RE)MEMBERED  
PROJECT**  
Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board

### Breathe with the directions

**4. NORTH-** Repeat steps 1 to 3 until you feel re-centered.

**3. WEST-** Slowly exhale through your mouth for 4 seconds.



**1. EAST-** Breathe in, counting to four slowly. Feel the air enter your lungs.

**2. SOUTH-** Hold your breath for 4 seconds. Try to avoid inhaling or exhaling for 4 seconds.

### Sing



Intentionally activating the Vagus nerve can calm your body's fight-or-flight response. The nerve is connected to your vocal cords and the muscles at the back of your throat. You could dust off your drum and sing a song from your family/tribe.

Humming your favorite bop, chanting affirmations, and even gargling warm water or tea can have a similar calming effect!

### Express

Express your feelings through written word, drawing or art, or speaking with a trusted friend. Allow difficult feelings to release their hold over you by expressing them in the way that suits you best.



### Ground

Sit or stand with your feet firmly planted. Notice the stability of the ground beneath you. Begin to imagine the feeling of Mother Earth's energy moving up from the ground into your feet. Then slowly imagine it moving up through the rest of your body. Imagine it moving upward and out your limbs as if you are a tree and it is moving from roots to the branches.

Gratitude to Danica Brown, PhD, for her assistance developing this tool

## TEACHINGS OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL

Greetings and warm welcome to all FAIHP relatives and community members. My name is Michael Jimenez, you're friendly neighborhood Peer Support Specialist out of the Wellness department. Our main focus in this department is to guide relatives to healthier habits and improved overall health. We believe that the people in general have an innate need for balance and direction. The problem we face as Native people is trying find wellness in a landscape that is unfamiliar to our ancestry. As a drug and alcohol counselor for the last three years I have come to notice patterns in the community I serve.



One pattern is the appeal to instant gratification, this includes but not limited to crash diets, drive through windows, and instant downloads. Our ancestors knew how to wait and to sit still in times of distress. This fast pace yields to very little and often we refuse to commit to slowing down until we go into complete breakdown. Before I share some helpful practices for balance I would like to say this. To my relatives who are suffering beyond their understanding, our hope is that you are able to reach out for professional support from a substance abuse counselor, therapist, spiritual leader, or psychiatrist. We here at FAIHP are proud to be able to provide these kinds of services. If you feel that you could benefit from professional help please reach out by phone to (559)320-0490.

The medicine wheel has four directions, North, South, East, and West. The wheel also has four colors, red, white, yellow, and black. We are taught this aligns with the cycle of life as well, baby, youth, adult, and elder.

We understand that as people we have an interconnected system of, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual. We understand as people when we are off in one direction, we are off in all other directions. For example, if one would become sad (emotion) the next thing is shut down (physical), followed by many protruding thoughts about the event that made them sad (mental) which pulls their desire to pray about it (spiritual). Often these thoughts can overwhelm an individual to the point of sickness. Many relatives want balance and wellness but find it hard know where to begin. If we can acknowledge the medicine wheel, the four directions, and an interconnected system in the unseen world. We will be able to find direction. I have included many therapies one can indulge in that satisfy each direction and brings a level of healing and in turn guides us to the "center" of the medicine wheel, or the center to our wellbeing. I would like to share a checklist for those of us who may be feeling off.

The first question one should ask is, am I hungry, angry, lonely, or tired (HALT)? If these questions cannot be satisfied and you need more direction than refer to the medicine wheel for a healing direction. We can pick an activity from a particular direction or where we feel we may be off. We are taught that all things must be done bit by bit. Which means it can be a slow process, much like a tree our growth happens twice as fast in the unseen world, or under the soil. Nothing we ever attempted happened perfect the first time out and healing comes to those who are faithful to their cause. Success is the result of consistent behavior and practices. Slow down and take time to care for yourself in this fast pace world we live in. I hope this article helps you look at the medicine wheel as a tool for healing and growth.

Thank you, to all my relations in a good way.

(See Medicine Wheel Diagram on page 9)



# TEACHINGS OF THE MEDICINE WHEEL

## ***Spiritual:***

- Guided meditation
- Journaling
- Praying
- Practice mindfulness throughout the day
- Be in nature
- Volunteer (service work)
- Hold a baby
- Go to ceremony or a spiritual place
- Be in nature
- Listen to music
- Finish a task or chore
- Carry a picture of yourself as a child

## ***Mental:***

- Reach out for support
- Practice non-judgement (Be mindful of thoughts and behaviors objectively)
- Positive daily readings
- Visualize a stop sign
- Get lost in a book
- Talk to a friend
- Watch a movie
- Watch TV (shows that elicit laughter)
- Google coloring book sheets
- Do a puzzle or crossword
- Complete a thought record
- Do a craft

## ***Physical:***

- Hot bath or shower
- Deep breathing
- Walk in nature
- Abstain from alcohol and caffeine
- Listen to body signals
- Go for a walk
- Go swimming
- Rest
- Scream
- Breathe
- Garden
- Gentle stretching

## ***Emotional:***

- Listen to music
- Cry
- Group therapy
- See a counselor
- Cook (if this is safe)
- Meditate
- Sing
- Play with your a child or pet
- See a therapist
- Carry affirmation cards





# 5K RUN/WALK

**REGISTRATION IS OPEN!**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2024**  
**AT WOODWARD PARK FRESNO, CA**

Scan To Register!

The Spirit Run is a community event aimed at promoting health and wellness among Native American communities in the Fresno area.

## OUR EVENT FEATURES:

- 5K RUN / 2 MILE WALK
- FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
- NATIVE DRUMMING
- ROUND DANCE

## RACE DAY

- SIGN IN STARTS @8:00AM
- 5K RUN BEGINS @ 9:30AM
- WALK BEGINS @9:35
- TROPHIES FOR 1ST IN EACH AGE CATEGORY



Please note: Pre-registration is limited to the first 300 runners/walkers. They will receive a Participant Bag. Pick up your Participant Bag on event day only, from 7:00-8:30AM. Items are not guaranteed for late arrivals.



**FAIHP**  
Fresno American Indian Health Project

**(559) 320-0490 [www.faihp.org](http://www.faihp.org)**

For more information visit:  
<https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Fresno/FresnoSpiritRun>  
or contact: Mike Colvard,  
[mcolvard@faihp.org](mailto:mcolvard@faihp.org)



# Wellbriety Meetings

Every Friday  
12:00pm- 1:00pm

1st Friday Open Meeting  
2nd Friday Topic Stick Meeting  
3rd Friday Step Study  
4th Friday Birthday Meeting



**FAIHP**  
Fresno American Indian Health Project

Come join us for noon meetings to create a place to support recovery and obtain sober support and friends in recovery. You do not need to sign up!



Meetings at:  
1551 E. Shaw Ave.  
Suite 121,  
Old Clubhouse,  
Fresno CA 93710

Questions?  
Contact:  
Deborah or Michael  
Native Wellness  
559-320-0490

**Show up and get your  
wellbriety on!**





# YOGA

All are welcome (staff and community) to come join us for an hour and a half of the mindful practice of Hatha Yoga. With this type of yoga, you move your body slowly and deliberately into different poses that challenge your strength and flexibility, while at the same time focusing on relaxation and mindfulness. Each session will begin with grounding through smudging and a meditation reading. This exercise is intended to bring wellness to your; spiritual, physical, mental and emotional health.

**This group will meet twice a week beginning January 8th, 2024.**

- Every Monday from 1:30pm to 3:00pm
- Every Thursday from 5:00pm to 6:30pm

Poses are modified to meet participants limits and skill set. All children 10 and older are welcome when accompanied by an adult.

Contact Person: Michael Jimenez  
Contact Email: [mjimenez@faihp.org](mailto:mjimenez@faihp.org)  
(559) 320-0490 ext.501



**FAIHP**

Fresno American Indian Health Project

1551 E. Shaw #121, Fresno CA 93710



Scan QR Code  
to register

## Ongoing Classes & Meetings

See our Live Calendar @ [www.faihp.org/calendar](http://www.faihp.org/calendar) for updated information and flyers and registration links.

### WISE Group

- Zoom & In-person
- 12:00-2:00pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursday each month

### Beading for Stress Management Group

- Zoom & In-person
- Every Tuesday, 5:30-7:30pm

### Sacred Circle

- Every Wednesday, 5:30-7:30pm
- In-person

### Community Advisory Committee

- Zoom Meeting/In-person
- Third Monday, 5:30-7:30pm

### Case Management Services

- Via phone or In-person

### Therapy Services

- In-person
- Via phone or video

### Family Spirit Services

- In-person
- Via telehealth (phone or Zoom)

### Nutrition & Wellness Class

- In-person
- 3rd Thursday each month, 12:00-2:00pm

### Nutrition Counseling

- Via phone or video

### Clubhouse Tutoring/Educational Support

- In-person (Limited capacity)

### Clubhouse Program

- In-person (Limited capacity)
- Monday through Thursday from 2pm-5pm. Through the first week of August

### Health Services

- In-person
- Via phone or video

### Talking Two Spirit Coffee Hour

- 1st Friday - 11:00-1:00pm
- In-person
- or Via Zoom

### Women's Wellness Group

- Fridays - 5:30-7:30pm
- In-person

### Alcohol & Drug Prevention & Counseling

- In-person (Limited capacity)

(Dates and times subject to change without notice.)

## Community Advisory Committee

Fresno American Indian Health Project's Community Advisory Committee (CAC) originated in 2012 and is made up of Native parents, elders, community members, and supporters. We meet regularly to provide our feedback to ensure the delivery of culturally appropriate services to the American Indian Alaska Native residents of Fresno and its surrounding communities.

### What's the current focus of the CAC?

This year FAIHP will complete a Strength and Needs Assessment and are working to encourage community feedback by completing different surveys.

We understand there may be reluctance to complete surveys and we know how important it is to provide more community education and information about efforts like this.

### When does the CAC meet?

The CAC meets every 3rd Monday of each month from 5:30-7:30pm In-person & via Zoom.

**Our next meeting is Monday, March 19, 2024**

### How can I get involved with the CAC?

Please contact Ruben Garcia at [rgarcia@faihp.org](mailto:rgarcia@faihp.org). He can send you more information and the Zoom link to our next meeting.





# FAIHP

Fresno American Indian Health Project

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559.320.0490

Fax: 559.320.0494

[www.faihp.org](http://www.faihp.org)



**ATTENTION:** If you would like to receive the Newsletter in digital format only please let us know contact: [mcolvard@faihp.org](mailto:mcolvard@faihp.org)

## Fresno American Indian Health Project

### 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
- Public Health Nurse Home Visits
- Case Management
- Transportation
- Health Referrals
- Youth After School Program
- Nutrition Counseling

### OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Leece Lee Oliver - Chair

Pam Coronado - Member

Bernadette Alvarez - Treasurer

Brandy Jaramillo - Secretary

Ralph Vigil - Member

Bobby Von Martin - Member

Audrey Osborne - Member

*Learn more about the board  
at [www.faihp.org/about-us/board-of-directors](http://www.faihp.org/about-us/board-of-directors)*

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.