

NEWSLETTER



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CEO REPORT - MARCH, 2025

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

As the days get longer and the warmth of spring returns, I'm reminded of the importance of renewal—not just in the natural world, but in the work we do together. March was a powerful month of advocacy, learning, and cultural affirmation, and I'm so proud of the meaningful spaces we were included in. Earlier this month, our FAIHP Board attended the Indian Health Service Annual Tribal Listening Session in Santa Ynez. This gathering offered insights into current healthcare challenges and priorities in Indian Country, with sessions covering critical topics such as Health Information Technology, Legislative Updates, Valley Fever, Traditional Healing, and more. It was an opportunity to connect and collaborate with our partners from all across California.

On March 22nd, we were honored to host California Indian Legal Services (CILS) for an informational session on Native students' rights to wear traditional regalia during graduation ceremonies. Attorney Jay Petersen, a CILS expert on this issue, helped students and families understand that their right to wear tribal regalia is protected under California law. We were so encouraged by the thoughtful questions, shared stories, and sense of pride in our cultural identity that filled the room that evening.

FAIHP
Fresno American Indian Health Project

Informational Session

For Native Graduating High School Student/Guardians
April 18, 2025 - 5:30-7:00pm
FAIHP: 1551 E. Shaw Ave. Suite 121 Fresno, CA 93710

Join us as we go over and learn about the Graduation Cultural Adornment Notification Form for Clovis Unified.

This form is to be submitted to high schools if your graduate plans on wearing cultural or tribal adornments.

Let us know you're going by scanning the QR Code!




INDIGENOUS JUSTICE

Questions:
Contact Youth Services
Anthony or Rachel
559-320-0490 Option 4

And we're not done yet—another info session is scheduled for April 18th, where graduates and their families can learn more about the Graduation Adornment Notification Form and how to ensure their traditions are honored during commencement. We hope you'll join us in spreading the word and uplifting our students as they take this significant step into the future.

March reminded us that advocacy is both personal and collective. When we stand together to protect Native health and wellness, we grow stronger as a community. Wishing you all a joyful April filled with purpose, connection, and celebration.

In community,
Selina de la Pena
CEO

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS AND CALENDAR



We attended Tribal TANF's Indigenous Women Conference on the First of March, which was a lovely gathering that included teachings on hand games, basketmaking, and more!



Our Honoring indigenous Women Event had a wonderful turnout, this year's taking place at Woodward Park. The outdoors offered an opportunity for women from all walks of life and generation to connect with one another and nature.



FAIHP hosted it's second annual White Root Dig at the Fresno State Native Garden, which featured community of all ages joining together to help harvest the plentiful White Root, a basketry material used by several Central Valley Tribes.



FAIHP Youth Attended the Boys With Braids conference in Tule River - more on page 5!

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS AND CALENDAR

Monday:

Walking and Wellness

Manchester Mall

11am-12pm

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
12-2pm
April 17, 2025

Native American Young Adult
Committee (NAYAC)
April 17, 2025
6pm-8pm

Talking 2Spirit
Friday, April 25
2:30-5:00pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

Developing Crisis Teams in Native Communities

April 10th and 11th

Location: Cal State University, Fresno

Table Mountain Reading room

Day #1: 11 AM - 5 PM

Day #2: 8 AM - 4 PM

April 12, 2025 - FAIHP 5k Spirit Run!

Veterans Outreach and Services Event - May 3rd, 2025, 9am-4pm

Please check our social media accounts or faihp.org/calendar for the latest updates on cancellations of programs and events.

FAIHP Presents: Veterans Outreach and Services Event



FAIHP
Fresno American Indian Health Project

Save The Date:

May 3rd, 2025

9am-4pm



FAIHP
1551 E Shaw Ave
Suite 121
Fresno, CA 93710

Questions or for more
information, contact:

Stoney Dodson
559-320-0490 ext. 125
sdodson@faihp.org

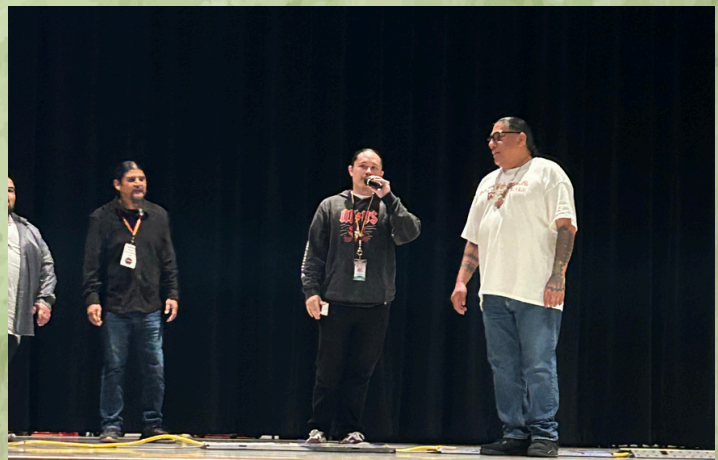
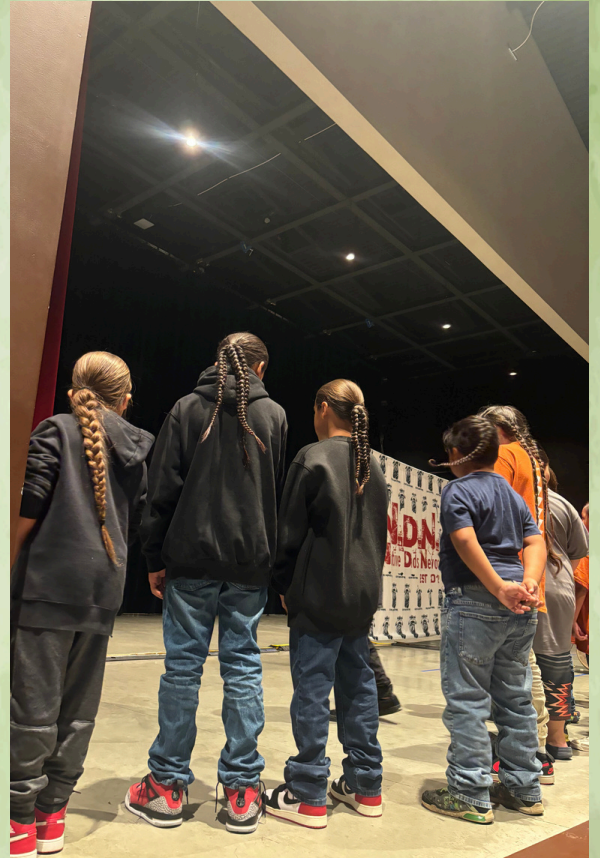


Office of
Tribal Government
Relations



Youth Department News

On March 22nd several Clubhouse participants got to attend the Boys with braids conference in Tule River. The day consisted of honoring our young men with long hair. They had break out sessions from hand games, basketry, to dodge ball for the youth under 12. The youth even got to meet Kauchani Bratt from Rez Ball. He autographed their shirts and took pictures with them. He also shared his story of becoming an actor. They enjoyed a braid contest where our very own Anthony Utterback came in second for the adult braid contest. Seven participants from our group won raffles including one youth winning the grand prize a PS5. We finished the day off watching a cultural dance ceremony from the Tule river tribe. It was an amazing and powerful day. We would like to thank Native Dads Network for this awesome conference. We would also like to thank our clubhouse families and participants for allowing us to take the youth to this conference without you our work would not be possible.





Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) is a five-day overnight camp for Native youth ages 13-17 years old, designed to promote wellness through culture, storytelling, community-building, and fun! This year's GONA will be **July 14-18, 2025**. Join us! Register today!

For Questions, contact:
Dori Andrews 559-320-0490 Option 4
dandrews@faihp.org



Nutrition and Wellness

Stepping Away from Diabetes: Foot Health for Natives

Submitted By Roberto Couto - MS, RDN - Registered Dietitian

Diabetes affects about 15% of American Indians nationally. This is the highest rate among all racial and ethnic groups. Having Uncontrolled Diabetes increases your risk of foot complications due to nerve damage and poor circulation. Diabetes was the sixth leading cause of death here in Fresno County. Having controlled Diabetes along with proper foot care and nutrition practices are essential in preventing serious health issues like infections and amputations. A crucial step in this journey is to be Mindful of our Diet.

The Role of Nutrition in Foot Health

A balanced diet can help manage blood sugar levels and support foot health

- **Control Blood Sugar:** Choose whole grains, lean proteins, beans, nuts, and vegetables.
- **Improve Circulation:** Eat omega-3-rich foods like salmon and walnuts.
- **Boost Healing:** Get enough vitamin C (citrus fruits) and zinc (lean meats, seeds).
- **Stay Hydrated:** Water keeps skin healthy and prevents cracks that can lead to infections.

Daily Foot Care Tips

Good foot care helps prevent complications:

- **Inspect Your Feet Daily:** Look for cuts, sores, or swelling.
- **Wash and Moisturize:** Keep feet clean and hydrated, but avoid lotion between toes.
- **Trim Nails Properly:** Cut straight across to prevent ingrown nails.
- **Wear Supportive Shoes:** Avoid walking barefoot to prevent injuries.
- **Stay Active:** Walking improves circulation and overall health.

Local Resources in Fresno

Tribal Health Clinics, Community Nutrition Programs, and Diabetes Support Groups offer local resources. Schedule your next visit with your Primary Care Provider or talk to your local Registered Dietitian here at FAIHP. Your health is essential, so take the right steps today to protect your feet and avoid the negative consequences of Uncontrolled Diabetes!



REFERENCES:

Cuaderes, E., Deshea, L., & Lamb, W. L. (2014). Weight-Bearing Exercise and foot health in Native Americans. *Care Management Journals*, 15(4), 184–195. <https://doi.org/10.1891/1521-0987.15.4.184>
Garrett, M., Ihaka, B., Murphy, R., & Kenealy, T. (2024). Diabetes-related foot interventions to improve outcomes for Indigenous peoples in High-income countries: a scoping review. *Science Direct*, 2, 100031. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/PII/S2949840624000226>

Family Spirit

Outdoor Fun and Recycling

Children and Recycling

Tuesday April 22 is Earth Day this year. Teaching kids about recycling helps them learn to be kind to our planet. Recycling is easy and is something families can learn and do together. By doing this, you are showing children that caring for our planet is not only important, but can also be fun! When parents recycle, kids see it as a lifestyle, not just as a chore. These experiences help encourage children to protect our planet for future generations. Here are some fun ways to make recycling fun:



Outdoor Recycling Activities for Kids

- ❖ Recycling Hunt – Turn recycling into a game! Give kids a list of common recyclables like plastic bottles and cardboard, then let them race to collect the most.
- ❖ Recycle Art – Use items like cereal boxes and magazines to create fun crafts. Kids can make sculptures, collages, or greeting cards while learning about repurposing materials.
- ❖ Sorting Game – Mix recyclables and non-recyclables, then challenge kids to sort them correctly into bins. This helps them understand what can and can't be recycled.
- ❖ Eco-Friendly Gardening – Teach kids about composting by letting them add food scraps and yard waste to a compost bin. They'll see how waste turns into soil for plants!
- ❖ Bird feeders- Make bird feeders using recycled materials like cereal boxes, toilet paper tubes, and milk cartons. Kids can create simple or detailed designs while learning about sustainability.



Why Should You Do Activities as a Family?

Quality time with children helps them develop their social and emotional skills. It also gives children a sense of value, helps build confidence, promotes stronger relationships, makes them feel safe and loved.

Have questions?

The Family Spirit Program at FAIHP is here to help. This is a program 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

REFERENCES:

- <https://www.bvtrashvalet.com/teaching-kids-about-recycling-fun-and-educational-activities-for-families/>
- <https://www.clovisrecyclingcenter.com/recycling-as-a-family-fun-ways-to-teach-kids-about-sustainability>

NURSES CORNER

April is a Month of Health Awareness- Let's Make an Impact!

April is a vital month for healthcare awareness, highlighting critical health issues and encouraging action. This month, we focus on public health, stress management, Healthcare equity and the power of donation.

National Public Health Week (April 7-13, 2025)

Public health affects everyone! This week is dedicated to promoting disease prevention healthy lifestyles, and community wellbeing. Consider simple ways to support public health:

- Wash hands frequently
- Stay up to date on vaccinations
- Support community wellness initiatives.

Stress Awareness Month

Chronic stress affects mental and physical health. Take steps to manage stress:

- Breathe & Reset- Practice mindfulness or take short breaks.
- Stay Active- Exercise releases endorphins to reduce stress.
- Connect&Communicate- Reach out for support when needed.

National Minority Health Month

This month focuses on reducing health disparities and improving access to care for underserved communities.

How can we help?

- Advocate for health equity.
- Support culturally competent care.
- Educate about preventive health measures.

Donate Life Month

Organ donation saves lives! Over 100,000 people in the U.S. are waiting for a transplant. One donor can save up to 8 lives. How can you help?

- Register as an organ donor.
- Encourage others to learn about donation.
- Honor past donors who have given the gift of life.



Together, we can promote better health, awareness, and positive change. Let's make April count!

Stay healthy, stay informed!

Contact us call or visit our site.

Fresno American Indian Health Project

1551 E. Shaw Ave. Ste.139, Fresno Ca 93710

559-320-0490 option # 2 for Medical dept.

NATIVE WELLNESS

MMIP

Submitted by Teela Kipp, Domestic Violence Coordinator

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Awareness Day, observed annually on May 5th, serves as a day to remember, honor, and raise awareness about the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people, particularly women and girls.

Here's a more detailed look at MMIP Awareness Day:

- Purpose:
 - The day is dedicated to raising awareness about the disproportionately high rates of violence and disappearances experienced by Indigenous people and to advocate for justice and healing for survivors and families.
- Origin:
 - May 5th was chosen as a day of awareness in recognition of the birthday of Hanna Harris, a missing Indigenous woman, and to honor the memory of all missing and murdered Indigenous people.
- Actions:
 - People participate in marches, protests, fundraisers, and other events to raise awareness and show support for the cause.
- Symbolism:
 - Many people wear red in recognition of the day, and the red handprint over the mouth is a symbol that represents standing with victims of violence who have been silenced, discounted, and not believed when they speak out.

Importance:

- The MMIP crisis is a significant issue facing Indigenous communities, and MMIP Awareness Day is an opportunity to bring attention to the issue and work towards solutions.
- Resources:
 - The Office for Victims of Crime (.gov) provides resources and information about MMIP, including a fact sheet and outreach materials.
- National Recognition:
 - President Biden issued a proclamation designating May 5th as MMIP Awareness Day.
- Events:
 - Numerous events are held nationwide to commemorate MMIP Awareness Day, including marches, vigils, and cultural celebrations.
- Federal Government Efforts:
 - The Department of Justice and other federal agencies are working to address the MMIP crisis through various initiatives, including increased funding for law enforcement and victim services.
- Community Involvement:
 - Addressing the MMIP crisis requires a collaborative effort, with communities playing an active role in prevention, seeking justice, and promoting healing for survivors and families.

Missing Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Walk

May 5th at Woodward Park 9am-1pm

Missing Murdered Indigenous People Candlelight Vigil at Fresno State

May 5th, 2025 (Time TBD)

For more information, please contact Teela Kipp, Domestic Violence Prevention Coordinator at 559-320-0490 ext. 506 or email at tkipp@faihp.org



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Our Nervous System and Mental Health

Source: CharlieHealth.com

By Alma Santiago, Outpatient Therapist

The autonomic nervous system is a network of nerves responsible for bodily functions we need to survive. It connects the brain to internal organs that allow for essential processes such as digestion, heart rate, glandular secretion (what produces sweat and saliva), and pupillary response (the pupil's response to light).

The autonomic nervous system is divided into two sections: the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system. The sympathetic nervous system, sometimes called the "fight or flight" system, is best known for its role in responding to stressful or scary situations. The parasympathetic nervous system, known as the "rest and digest" system, is responsible for helping people feel safe and relaxed by controlling breathing, lowering heart rate, and regulating digestion. A dysregulated nervous system is defined as an imbalance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems.

How can you regulate a dysregulated nervous system?

There are several strategies and mental health interventions that can help you effectively restore balance to your body and help you get to a more regulated nervous system.

1. **Talk Therapy** – Mental health treatments such as Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) teaches people about distress tolerance, emotional regulation, interpersonal effectiveness and mindfulness.
2. **Vagus Nerve Exercises**- Somatic therapy focuses on the mind-body connection and often includes exercises designed to help people release physical tension and improve overall well-being. Some examples include deep breathing exercises and cold exposure.

If a dysregulated nervous system is impacting your quality of life or mental health, consider seeking mental health support by contacting FAIHP Behavioral Health and scheduling an assessment.



@PSYCHOTHERAPY.CENT

What Causes a Dysregulated Nervous System?



- A trauma or event in the past that we could not process at the time, so it didn't complete and got stuck in our nervous system.
- Continued exposure to danger and stress.
- Addictive substances.
- Living in an unsafe environment.
- Life transitions such as death, pregnancy, divorce etc.

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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

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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.