

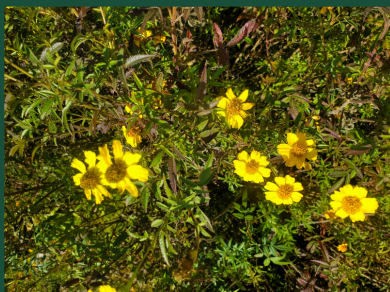
NEWSLETTER

In this issue:

- CEO Report (2)
- Community Highlights (3)
- Community Calendar (3)
- Clubhouse News (4)
- Nutrition News (5)
- Family Spirit Article (6)
- Nurses Corner (7)
- Native Wellness (8)
- Behavioral Health (9)
- Suicide Awareness (10-11)



Our Spirit Run5k returns April 12!





CEO REPORT - FEBRUARY, 2025

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

Spring has officially sprung, and with it comes a season of renewal, community, and movement! As we enter March, I am excited about the upcoming opportunities to come together in celebration, health, and support!

One of our most special gatherings is just around the corner. On March 15th, we will host our annual Honoring Indigenous Women event at the Native Garden at Woodward Park. This event provides a space for healing and connection, and this year's theme is "Rooted in Resilience." Space is limited, and registration is required, so check out further details on page 4!

Looking ahead, we are getting ready for our annual 5K Spirit Run on April 12! The Spirit Run 5K is a unique physical experience that brings the community together. More than just a run, it is an opportunity to embrace physical, emotional, and mental balance. Our logo and theme, inspired by our board member Ralph Vigil, reflect and strengthen our journey.

- The Eagle – brave, strong, knowing, and guides us through songs from the Creator.
- The Wolf – teaches us the way of loyalty, family, communication, and group wisdom.
- The Horse – our lost brother that guides us to prosperity and health.
- The Runner – the Warrior that serves as a leader—not from the front or the back, but from among the life forces gifted to us by the Creator.



Whether you walk, run, or jog, we welcome everyone to participate—for free! It's a wonderful way to get active, enjoy the outdoors, and build a strong and healthy community together.

Additionally, we are proud to partner with the VA to host a Veterans Services Information Resources Fair on May 3rd from 9 AM to 4 PM. This event will provide vital information about the benefits and services available to those who have served. We invite all Veterans and their families to attend and take advantage of this invaluable resource.

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS AND CALENDAR



Some of our community members and staff traveled to San Francisco this past weekend to take part in the Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits (BAAITS) Pow Wow, an incredible celebration of Indigenous and Native 2Spirit identity.



Thank you so much to the volunteers at the Fresno State Native garden who join Michelle bi monthly on Thursdays to help maintain and provide stewardship to the land and plants!

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
February 20, 2025

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

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

Financial Wellness Class: Monthly on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday, First Session March 18th
1:00pm -2pm, Suite 121

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 15, 2025 - Honoring Indigenous Women: contact 559-320-0490 Option 4 for more details, or visit our social media/website.

April 12, 2025 - FAIHP 5k Spirit Run!

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

Nutrition and Wellness

Leading the Way to a Healthy Community

Submitted By Roberto Couto - MS, RDN - Registered Dietitian

Health and wellness are deeply rooted in Native traditions. However, modern challenges have led to increased rates of diabetes, heart disease, and obesity in many native communities. By reembracing traditional foods, cultural wisdom, and holistic wellness practices, we can reclaim our health and build a stronger, healthier Native community.

A crucial step in this journey is to be Mindful of our Diet.

- **Traditional Foods** such as wild game, fish, berries, beans, corn, and squash are nutrient-dense and free from harmful additives. Reintroducing these ancestral foods can help prevent chronic illnesses and promote overall well-being. It is equally important to avoid processed foods high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats. By making informed choices, we can maintain a balanced diet and take control of our health.
- **Physical Activity** is another essential pillar of wellness. Historically, Native communities moved a lot more than today because of hunting, farming, and traditional games. Today, we can do more walking, dancing, and participating in cultural events such as powwows or local exercise classes to improve fitness while reinforcing cultural identity and community bonds.
- **Community Support** is vital for fostering health and wellness. Gathering together to share knowledge, host cooking/nutrition classes, and encourage traditional food gatherings can inspire healthier choices. Additionally, collaborating with healthcare professionals who respect Native traditions ensures culturally appropriate care.
- **Addressing Health Disparities** is not a simple task. It requires a multi-pronged approach that includes improving food programs, promoting breastfeeding, supporting food sovereignty, expanding local food cultivation, and making healthier foods more affordable. By blending ancestral wisdom with modern strategies, we can restore balance and create a healthier future for future generations.



REFERENCE: Warne, D., & Wescott, S. (2019). Social determinants of American Indian Nutritional Health. Current Developments in Nutrition, 3, 12-18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdn/nzz054>

Barnabe, C. (2021). Towards attainment of indigenous health through empowerment: Resetting health systems, services and provider approaches. BMJ Global Health, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2020-004052>

Family Spirit

Children and Vision

- Your child's eyesight and visual development will go through many changes. You and your pediatrician will monitor these vision milestones as they grow from infant to toddler to school age. Although these developments occur at a different pace for each child, there are ways to ensure your child's eye health is on target.

Tips to Protect Your Child's Vision:

- ❖ Eat well: A healthy diet with fruits and vegetables supports your child's vision
- ❖ Limit screen time: Too much screen time can worsen vision problems; take regular breaks to reduce strain
- ❖ Get enough sleep: Sleep helps the eyes heal from daily use and environmental irritants
- ❖ Spend time outdoors: Outdoor play allows the eyes to recover from strain and provides vitamin D
- ❖ Use protective eyewear and sunglasses: Protective gear prevents 90% of eye injuries, and sunglasses protect against harmful UV rays
- ❖ Get regular eye exams: Regular checkups help monitor and manage your child's vision



When to schedule eye exams for your kids:

Newborns: Before they leave the nursery, newborns receive a comprehensive eye exam

First year: Eye health is monitored during well-child visits

Ages 1 and up: Annual screenings are conducted at pediatric appointments and sometimes at school



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

NURSES CORNER

March 2025: Colon Cancer Awareness Month

Getting screened regularly is one of the best ways to prevent colon cancer. A screening can help find cancer even if you have no symptoms. A colonoscopy isn't the only test available, there are some you can do at home.

Even if you have no family history of colon cancer, you should get a screening starting at 45 years old.

The FIT test is done every year; it detects hidden blood in the stool. The FIT test is done at home, and no prep is required for the FIT test.

A Colonoscopy test is done every ten years. A Colonoscopy will removal of any polyps in rectum and lower colon. There is Special diet and bowel prep required. Sedation is likely so you will need a ride home. A Colonoscopy is best test for preventing colorectal cancer.

Talk with your health care provider to decide which test is right for you. At FAIHP we offer the FIT test and if needed will refer you to a gastroenterologist for a Colonoscopy.

Call (559) 320-0490 to schedule your appointment today.



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

Exciting Upcoming Events: Bee's Bliss Sage Talk, Fresno State Native Garden Volunteer Day & Fresno State Whiteroot Dig!

Submitted by Michelle Pipkin, Garden Coordinator

Bee's Bliss Sage Talk

On **March 27th**, join us for a fascinating talk all about the incredible Bee's Bliss Sage (*Salvia bee's bliss*), a native plant that plays a crucial role in supporting pollinators and thriving in our local ecosystem. Known for its fragrant purple blooms and resilience, Bee's Bliss Sage is a must-have in any native garden. Excellent opportunity to deepen your gardening knowledge.

Open Garden Volunteer Day

In addition to the Bee's Bliss Sage talk, **March 27th** will also mark our Open Garden Volunteer Day at the FAIHP Garden. This ongoing volunteer program invites community members to come out and help maintain and improve our beautiful garden, while gaining hands-on experience with the Bee's Bliss sage. Whether you're experienced or just starting, all are welcome to get their hands dirty and contribute to this important project. It's a wonderful chance to connect with others who share your passion for native plants, and you'll leave knowing you've made a tangible impact on the garden's growth and health.

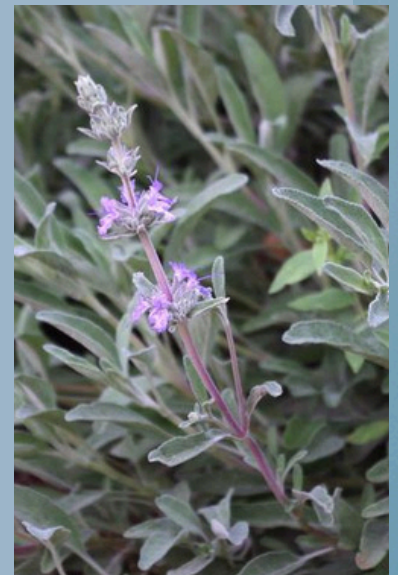
Bi-Weekly Volunteering at Fresno State Native Garden

Did you know we have regular volunteering days? The Fresno State Native Garden hosts bi-weekly volunteer sessions, where you can assist with planting, weeding, and other essential tasks that keep the garden thriving. These sessions are open to everyone, and we encourage you to stop by when you can—whether you're looking to contribute a little time or make it a regular part of your routine.

Save the Date: White Root Dig Event at Fresno State Native Garden!

We're excited to announce a special event at the Fresno State Native Garden—the White Root Dig Event happening on **March 22nd**! This is a fantastic opportunity to get involved in preserving and propagating native plants in our community garden.

The White Root Dig will focus on digging basket roots and transplanting native plants, helping to rejuvenate our local garden while promoting the growth of essential species. It's a hands-on event where you can learn about the native basket plants. Whether you're an experienced gardener or a first-time volunteer, your participation will make a meaningful difference in the garden's future. Be sure to mark your calendars! Stay tuned for more details, and we can't wait to see you there!



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Attainable Mental Health Goals for a Balanced Life

By: David Stroud, LMFT

Maintaining mental well-being doesn't require drastic changes. It's about taking small, achievable steps that foster lasting improvement. Here are four simple but impactful mental health goals you can experiment with yourself:

1. Practice Mindful Breathing (5 Minutes a Day)

Even a few moments of mindful breathing can reduce stress and improve focus. Set aside five minutes daily to breathe deeply and bring your awareness to the present moment.



2. Daily Gratitude Reflection

Writing down three things you're grateful for each day helps to reframe unhelpful thoughts and cultivates a more positive mindset. This practice only takes a few minutes but offers lasting emotional benefits.



3. Set Boundaries for Screen Time

Limit social media and unnecessary scrolling by designating "tech-free" hours each day. Start with 30 minutes in the morning or before bedtime.



4. Schedule "Me Time" (15-30 Minutes Daily)

Taking intentional time for yourself – even just 15 minutes – can help reduce stress and recharge your mind. Use this time for activities you enjoy, such as reading, journaling, or simply resting.

By setting small, attainable goals like these, you create a sustainable foundation for better mental health. Small steps today lead to meaningful change tomorrow.

References:

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<https://www.snhu.edu/about-us/newsroom/health/what-is-self-care>



Woven Resilience

By Storm Heredia, Peer Mentor

In this era of American society it may feel like what has happened before is happening again, a form of *Deja Vu*. For how familiar this feels, it presents its own unfamiliarities to the living mind, *Jamais vu*. Our climate thickens with emotional disturbances, and they are steeped with actions that threaten our wellness. Fear offers much to feel worried for; speaking on behalf of anyone who feels like the 'other' in mainstream society. We as a people must remain mindfully aware. Anger, frustration, sadness, exhaustion; These are perfectly human sensations. Yet, these feelings can sway us to not act within our best interests. Again, our people face uncertainty in the present paradigm. Yet here we stand woven together like the baskets of our grandmothers, enduring time and place, carrying within it our resilience. A resilience that perseveres through our shared suffering, and molds into our embodiment of healing and love. Systematic oppression plays its part in pulling at our roots as if we are weeds, but they don't understand the material used in basket weaving. The white root, for example, ingrains itself so deep within mother earth that it becomes difficult to get the whole of it. Just like white roots we are implanted in our environment, ready to do our part in sustaining wellness through resilience.

Resilience is defined as "the ability to face change or disruption without being fundamentally compromised"(Steele, Michalyn, 2020. pg 4). Our belonging, interdependence, mastery and generosity all reside within that superpower. Tethered in our roots, resilience plays a huge role in our ability to maintain community/cultural cohesion. Our ancestors are famous for their Indigenous resilience. We still are. The system probes our values, principles and wellness with its tactics of legal maneuvers and actions. Although many of us have experienced the negative effects of that, we should remember to focus our collective consciousness on what we can control: our communal knowledge, traditional wisdom, cultural ingenuity, spiritual strength and physical willingness. I encourage every individual to reshape the smoke screens of political hardship into a refreshing outpour of motivation to resist fear, to spread love, and to care for one another. By relying on one another to create safe spaces for shared experiences, free-flowing information, and cultural practice we can ingrain our foundation of health and well-being. That is how we nourish our indigenous wellness. It begins with what we can control, our individual selves. From the mindful practice of self-regulation, we can help others to do the same. People who are emotionally capable will not be so easily manipulated. Trust in your individual resilience and collectively we will bear through the toughest, interwoven like the basket, united in our ways.



“
The white root, for example, ingrains itself so deep within mother earth that it becomes difficult to get the whole of it. Just like white roots we are implanted in our environment, ready to do our part in sustaining wellness through resilience.”

-Storm Heredia

Woven Resilience, contd.

People who are one with their mind, body, heart and spirit are impenetrable in nature. We are bold as the Sierras, sturdy like oak, vibrant and beautiful like poppies. We are both our ancestors and our descendants. We are people who can take care of ourselves. To possess faith in one another, is to believe in our rights to live a good life; as a people, with creator and with creation. You are smarter than what those in opposing power perceive you to be. You are capable and worthy. Let us continue to practice and share that good medicine the universe so graciously gifted us: participate in ceremonies, drum at powwows, sing our songs with pride, harvest berries and roots, braid our hair, bead our fashion, and simply be. Practice the art of letting go of what you cannot control. Be your best self amidst chaos. Spread love and positivity when and where you can. Inspire hope in those who need it most. Be resilient. Our entrenched roots will sustain and cultivate our healing. We are our grandmother's baskets. Stay well relatives.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge my relatives who offered their insight in the development of this article, and to every single person who knowingly/ unknowingly offered their wisdom in conversations. I am grateful for you all. The community is grateful for you. These words are not mine, but ours. Thank you for your roles in facilitating wellness. Here are a few quotes from leaders in our community:



“ —

“The answers are within our community. Each of us has a gift to share. By sharing our gifts we can ignite the fire of hope and that fire can grow with our willingness to connect and share.”

-Ruben Garcia, Director of Native Wellness, Pomo

“Our youth have a right to be educated. It is a process. Change begins with them. It's what we do today to understand how to help our families, our teachings. Keep everything else in place. Don't give up. Expand more on what you have to offer.”

- Delaine Bill, Cultural Support Specialist, Mono/Wukchumni

“Don't wait to take matters into your own hands. Don't allow oppressors to convince you that standing in community is a weakness. Those beliefs could hurt us in the long run. By talking about difficulty, we become a frontline, a barricade. Brick by brick we come together. This is what we have to do now.”

- April Blair, Instructional Aide, Yaqui

“Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion.’ This quote from Bell Hooks reminds us that healing happens in community, not in isolation. Our ancestors understood this profoundly, marking life's most significant moments with ceremonies and gatherings that brought people together to support, celebrate, and heal as one. Today, we can honor those traditions by continuing to share space, uplift one another, and recognize the value we bring. We all have a purpose, even if the journey to find it is challenging. But with the support of others, that path becomes clearer, and we are reminded that we are never alone in our healing or our purpose.”

-Serena Cuevas, Suicide Prevention Coordinator

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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

Our Board of Directors

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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.