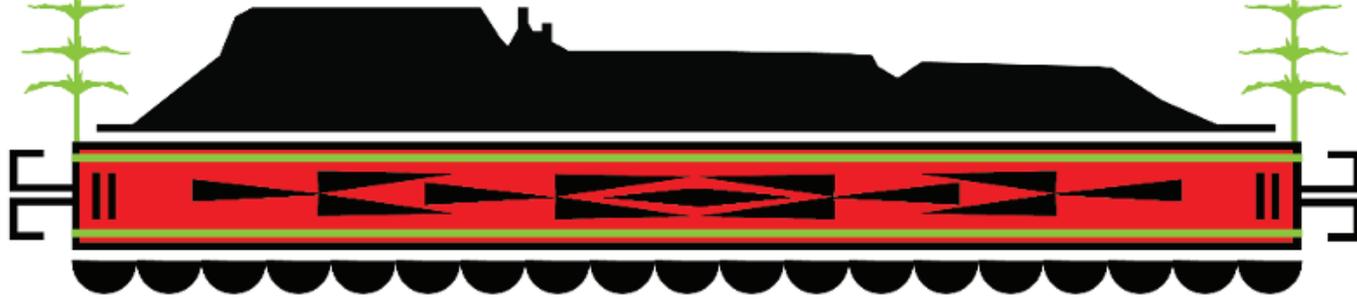


# A:shiwi A:wan Messenger



Issue 34 • December 27, 2023

## Glucose Guardians Wage War on Diabetes Epidemic Gripping Zuni

A group of passionate Zuni High students is on a mission to combat the diabetes crisis overwhelming the Zuni community.

The Glucose Guardians, including Kaylia Baca, Alexandra Eustace, Taryn Neha, Kioni Kallestewa, and Nathan Hall, members of the HOSA-Future Health Professionals ZHS chapter, have launched an awareness campaign to empower residents to improve their health and prevent diabetes.

"Diabetes has become far too common in our community," said Alexandra Eustace, 17, co-founder of the Glucose Guardians. "We want to give people the tools to fight back."

The Guardians brought their message to the masses at the recent Fall Festival held at A:shiwi College in October. Armed with eye-catching infographics and interactive activities, they educated attendees about diabetes prevention and care. "So many people stopped to talk about their struggles with diabetes or their concerns about developing it," Kaylia Baca said. "Just starting that conversation can motivate change."

Recognizing that lasting change starts early, the Guardians also presented to faculty members at Zuni High School for Diabetes Awareness Day last month. "Teachers can have an enormous influence on developing healthy habits," explained Taryn Neha, 16, another Glucose Guardian co-founder. "We want them to have the right knowledge to guide students." "This disease touches so many lives in our community," added Kioni Kallestewa. "By working together, we have the power to make an impact."

These events are just the beginning. The Guardians have arranged workshops, health fairs, and community discussions in the coming months to further spread understanding about diabetes.

"This is going to be a marathon, not a sprint," said Nathan Hall. "But with the passion of our Guardians and the support of Zuni residents, we know we can make great strides against this epidemic."

To volunteer or learn more, follow the Glucose Guardians on Instagram: [glucose\\_guardians24](#), and Facebook: Community Awareness Group: Glucose Guardians

## ZHS Students Launch Anti-Vaping Campaign



Seeking to combat the surge in vaping among youth, six sophomores at Zuni High School have created "Teens United Against Vaping" to educate their peers about the risks.

The group – comprised of Brooklyn Sanchez, Jaynie Lalio, LaNiya Kallestewa, Andruw Leekela, Gabby Peyneta, and Kaliya Kallestewa – kicked off their awareness campaign at the Zuni Fair in September with an informational float and pamphlets.

"We want to spread understanding about the health impacts of vaping so students can make informed choices,"

said LaNiya Kallestewa.

They brought their message to A:shiwi College's Fall Festival in October, connecting with attendees while playing volleyball. In November, they gave presentations at Twin Buttes Cyber Academy and Zuni Middle School, displaying posters and brochures.



The campaign culminated with Zuni High's Anti-Vaping Spirit Week in December, showcasing a video and poster contest to rally support. "Seeing fellow students embrace our mission has been so inspiring," noted Gabby Peyneta.

Next, the group is preparing to present their work at the HOSA State Leadership Conference, for Future Health Professionals, to motivate youth action statewide. "By students uniting, we have the power to drive change," said Andruw Leekela.

Follow along with Teens Against Vaping on Facebook and Instagram [@teensagainstvaping2026](#). More events are coming as they continue their advocacy.

## Zuni Youth Enrichment Project Receives Grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico

The Zuni Youth Enrichment Project announced that it recently received a \$20,000 grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico's Blue Impact initiative. The grant will allow Zuni Youth Enrichment Project to increase community-wide trail access and improve health outcomes for Zuni residents.

"Our Zuni ancestors were farmers, ranchers and hunters, so physical activity was part of their daily lives," said Tara Wolfe, ZYEP program manager.

"During the times of the Pueblo Revolt, the Zunis were part of messenger teams that would hand deliver vital messages from pueblo to pueblo by means of running on trails. BCBSNM's Blue Impact grant will allow us to increase the capacity of 60 miles of ancestral trails connecting Zuni neighborhoods, while also improving trail access, safety and performance."

*Ancestral Trails continues on page 7*

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# Grief and Loss in the Zuni Community

by Robert K Waatsa, LPCC, LADAC  
Shumak'olo:wa Health Center

The process of grieving is a journey and there is no right or wrong to grieve, no single path, and no particular approach. There are many paths, and individuals progress in different ways and at different times. Some aspects that contribute to the grieving process include "person-related" or "event-related" factors. Person-related reasons involve gender or females (mainly mothers), close relationships to the deceased, being a widow/widower, and vulnerability factors such as depression, multiple losses, and a history of trauma. Event-related causes include natural deaths, accidents, homicide, and suicide.

The process of mourning can be perceived as a search for meaning or an attempt to make sense of the loss. For many, faith can act as a coping resource in the attempt to find meaning. Regarding our Zuni culture, our spirituality and ancestral memory can be sources of strength when human power fails to provide the necessary comfort and reassurance. The inability to find meaning or some form of consolation in loss can lead to complicated or prolonged grief, and grief reactions such as confusion, anger, self-blame, guilt, and depression. Grief does not go through a normative process of mourning, and there is considerable variability in emotional experiences and responses.

Reflecting on the mourning process, individuals can explore and focus on areas such as the circumstances surrounding the loss, the meaning of what has been lost, reactions to the loss, changes in the life of the mourner, and the relationship to the deceased. Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., and Julie Myers Psy.D., outlined "Strategies for Coping with Grief Checklist" which an

individual may consider incorporating to help them on their healing journey. Some of these include:

## Seek Help and Comfort from Others

- I shared my story with others who I thought would appreciate and benefit from it.
- I found my faith and participated in cultural practices.
- I sought help from mental health professionals and utilized learned skills.
- I decided not to face the grieving process alone.
- I sought help from my elders and spiritual healers.

## Physical and Emotional Self-Care

- I reconnected with my body through exercise, art, healthy nutrition, and regular sleep.
- I allowed myself to feel positive emotions such as love, joy, hopefulness, compassion, and gratitude.
- I managed my negative emotions using slow breathing, mindfulness, positive self-talk, and prayer.
- I allowed myself to cry at times and know the feeling of grief from other feelings such as anger, fear, guilt, and shame.
- I have established a safe and comforting space for myself.

## Stay Connected to the Deceased while Recognizing the Reality of the Loss

- I memorialized the deceased life through special occasions, words, or images that would bring

honor and remembrance.

- I asked for forgiveness and shared joys and sorrows.
- I accepted that sadness was normal and learned how to be with my grief.
- I understand that intense grief may arise so I learned strategies to cope ahead.

## Create Safety and Self-Empowerment

- I gave myself permission to understand that grief takes time and patience.
- I slowly introduced myself to activities, places, or things that I avoided.
- I reminded myself of my strengths and all the hard times I have gotten through in the past.
- I realized I have choices, no matter how hard life is.

## Move Toward a future with a Strong Sense of Self

- I regained my sense of hope for the future. I am creating a life worth living and taking control of my future.
- I worked on gaining my sense of self-identity, knowing that my life has changed but I'm still me.
- I transformed my grief and emotional pain into meaningful activities that created something good and helpful.
- I use my faith, religion, and spiritual beliefs to comfort me and move on.

This holistic approach to healing may lessen the impact an duration of grief responses. It is important to explore cultural aspects of healing to uncover personal and spiritual strengths in the grieving process.

Shumak'olo:wa Health Center is a resource to find support and comfort.

# The Pueblo of Zuni is Named a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 2023 Culture of Health Prize Winner

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has announced that the Pueblo of Zuni is one of nine communities chosen to receive the 2023 RWJF Culture of Health Prize. The prize celebrates communities across the country where people and organizations are collaborating to build solutions to barriers that have created unequal opportunities for health and well-being.

"For me, Zuni being a RWJF Culture of Health Prize winner is a great honor, and it is a step toward Indigenous ways of knowing and being getting recognition for the ways they help us and Mother Earth heal from the various traumas that have caused us to be 'unhealthy,'" said Tahlia Natachu, executive director of the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project, a partner in the Pueblo of Zuni.

"When a community is entrusted with leaning into their strengths and culture, amazing things can happen. We saw that with our own eyes through our collaboration with Zuni on various initiatives. We hope that this prize will elevate our story and allow other communities to see that they can also accomplish their wellness and



health goals through the teachings of our ancestors. We must return to our roots.

"I will never be able to fully express my appreciation for RWJF and our partners who made this experience possible," she continued. "Every single person who invested a piece of themselves into this initiative is the reason we are successful today. It's all for our youth. They are our greatest treasure."

Since partnership within communities is at the heart of the prize, it is awarded to whole cities, towns, tribes, reservations, and counties. The Pueblo of Zuni joins eight other 2023 prize winners, including Austin, Texas;

Baltimore, Maryland; Detroit, Michigan; Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation; Houston, Texas; Los Angeles County, California; Ramsey County, Minnesota; and Tacoma, Washington.

"The work of our current and past prize winners highlights the real staying power of community-born solutions, and their success inspires greater collaboration across public and private sectors," said Julie Morita, MD, RWJF executive vice president.

"This year's winners demonstrate what's possible when we work in partnership and ensure that commu-

*Culture of Health continues on page 6*



# A:shiwí Dance of Resilience: a Reflection

by Councilman Wemytewa

Domdonan deha:do'up, ko'kwa dewuchina. A:ho'i, A:shiwí habonna. Chowa elumadinan ye:la'unna. Odak'yanna.

When the sound of drum beats, “dom, dom, dom, dom, . . .” rise from the Pueblo barrel drum, emotions stir. People gather. They dance. People embrace dance as a form of expressing joy, belonging, resilience. I know the joy and feeling of really appreciating dance as an art form, a form of expression, of being “Shiwí”. “Ho’ Shiwí. Hon A:shiwí. After having enjoyed the Harvest Dance on August 14, 2023, I am encouraged and inspired to write my reflection of that day.

First, if dance is a demonstration of resilience, what does it look like? The word loosely means flexible and strong. The day of the dance, the A:shiwí, who gathered, were at their best, in respect towards each other and show-casing the most basic of artistic expression – Dance – in a beautiful and sophisticated fashion. Hundreds of dancers gave life to the beat of the drum as they carried themselves with great pride. “Look at me, I can dance. I am beautiful. I am Shiwí.”

Second, dance cannot be dance without song. Yes, song can be silently sung in your mind, or just under your breath. “—Isisik’yanna.” But on this day, it was robust singing! A full display of emotion and expression. Like the dancers, the singers were beautiful. They too, took song to the highest level of expression. “We must remind ourselves we are A:shiwí.” (We must also remember and honor those we lost, including those to COVID 19.)

The people came together. Let us remember how

we all shared our time together and how we embraced our cultural heritage in what we may call the “Dance of Resilience.”

As the long line of dancers moved, rotating from one end to the other in the makeshift plaza, there was uniform rhythm and grace. The dance in its full length, twisted and turned, like a serpent dancing in the wind or in the depths of great waters, “K'ya:du! Lan'a,” as the drumming and singing, the intonations of the vocals, rose and fell to the melody. The strong barrel-chested men happy and content with their singing. They brought love and life to their art. The act of singing, of generations of song, remembered. Like A:shiwí and corn, corn needs human, humans need corn. Song needs singers, as do dancers.

The harvest dance, an aspect of our culture that can be physically challenging and yet uplifting; the regalia exemplified beautiful fashion. Imagine the hours of mixing and matching colors, choice of ribbons, feathers, etc. And the years of acquiring the family heirloom. It takes discipline and hard work to accomplish such an awe-inspiring feat. This is A:shiwí resilience.

Girls danced without effort, light on their feet, almost as if they were floating on air and were quick with their feet, making sure each dance step touched the ground within the beat of the drum. Left foot up, right foot down, up, down, up, down, up, down, white leggings mesmerizing, so was the swaying -- left, right, left, right of the fringes of the belt sashes, the long hair, and the whole human form. The whole line of dancers, too, swayed in rhythm.

The boys and young men, they were cool and composed, focused. A young boy struggled to keep up

with the dance as his sash belt and kilt came loose. A young girl, stepped out of line to adjust her legging wraps. With a little help from the elders, the adolescent children are soon “on-their-feet” and were back in the dance. As A:shiwí elders we momentarily reflected... about our life experiences dealing with growing pains and missteps along the way. A little distraction—a loose belt, a loose legging, it shouldn't matter much. We are resilient. Just follow the beat of the drum, the heart-beat of Mother Earth. The pulse of resilience.

During the dance, over and over, the songs resonated deep within my “Hotda”, the “eardrum.” Yes, this is the song and dance of resilience, of yester-years and of today. And of tomorrow.

Perhaps through song and dance, we can call all our A:shiwí a:wan haydoshna:we back. We can call all our strength back. We are resilient.

**CONCLUSION:** Can this social gathering be a model for supporting other areas of our communal life? Can we dance to heal inter-generational trauma? Can we drum and sing to console the pain of mental health challenges?

The grand finale came with a roar of singing and the joining of all the dancers from all sides. Lines of dancers moved in rhythm and grace, youthful energy. Even the elders gave all they had. (“Ben Begay” was waiting in the medicine cabinet at days end!). The drums kept a steady beat... “dom, dom, dom, dom, . . .”

Happy Winter Solstice. Hons Idiwan'an A:de'chikya. Wans hon yu'tahkudinna.

## ZYEP Celebrates Annual Down Syndrome Awareness Month

The Zuni Youth Enrichment Project commemorated its second annual Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October with a special “Buddy” event at Major Market's Halloween Trunk or Treat.

ZYEP's “Buddy” events raise awareness and provide support for special needs families, according to Buddy Booth organizer Kenzi Bowekaty, who is one of ZYEP's Food Sovereignty leaders.

In advance of this year's event, she worked with family, friends and colleagues to prepare gifts for all Zuni families that have a member with Down Syndrome. Along the way, they opened up the gift-giving effort to include families with other special needs.

As the parent of a 3-year-old son with Down Syndrome, Bowekaty said this inclusivity is important to her. She noted that all young people with special



hot cocoa kit, a “squishmallow” that could serve as a pillow or trick-or-treat bag, a Slinky, fidget toys, a dart-board-style game, socks, a beanie and gloves for cold weather, wristbands, keychains, and more. The kits also incorporated a variety of positive messages, from the little keychains to treat sticks for the cakes.

“We reminded parents and caregivers that your child loves you even when you feel invisible, and real superheroes live in the hearts of children,” Bowekaty said. “We are ‘The Lucky Few.’ And we reminded the children that what makes you different is what makes you beautiful.”

“Our families have a lot in common, and I'm so glad we could make this accommodation to go to their homes,” she continued.

“Everyone was happy. It was such a good feeling.”



needs deserve to be recognized, as do their parents and caregivers.

Special needs children aren't always included, so we want to let them know they're special, they're loved and cherished, and they're being celebrated,” she explained. “And special needs parents aren't always recognized for their hard work and the challenges they face, so we want them to know we see them.”

The ZYEP team had the gifts ready for families at the Buddy Booth on Oct. 28, but the blustery day kept many families home. Bowekaty said she understands that on a very personal level. “When you have a child with special needs, your day might not go as planned,” she said. “The weather might be too much for them, or a new event might seem scary. So, since I had the gifts in the trunk of my car, we decided to deliver them to the families at home!”

The goal was to provide each gift recipient with something to eat, to wear, and to do. Adorned with tissue paper and colorful helium balloons, each large gift bag included thoughtfully curated items such as a cake kit, a



# ZYEP and Partners Launch 6th Annual Delapna:we Project

The Zuni Youth Enrichment Project has announced that registration for the 6th annual Delapna:we Project has closed, and preparations for this year's project are now under way. Made possible with support from the U.S. Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), New Mexico Arts (a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs) and countless individual donors, this innovative project brings the Zuni people's traditional oral stories to life.

A collaboration between the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project, A:shiwi A:wam Museum and Heritage Center, Edaakie Arts, ShiwiSun Productions, Zuni Public Library, KSHI Radio and other Zuni community members, the Delapna:we Project focuses on the performing arts.

According to Tahlia Natachu-Eriacho, ZYEP's executive director, the 2023-24 Delapna:we Project will return to its roots with a traditional stage production.



Once registration closes, work on the 2023-24 Delapna:we Project will begin. The selected stories will inform the scriptwriting process. Participants will engage in theater workshops, where they will learn about stagecraft and the cultural context around the stories; they also will hear the voices of the elders, captured so long ago.

What's more, participants will have opportunities to learn and practice the Zuni language in a safe, encouraging space.

"Last year's puppet show was 100 percent in Zuni," Natachu-Eriacho said. "That's our goal for the play this year."

Participants also will design sets, create costumes, and prepare for full rehearsals in advance of the February performance. Natachu-Eriacho said project organizers and participants alike are looking forward to another fulfilling season.

"Last year, 75 percent of parents and guardians reported that their children spoke more Zuni at home during the project, and 83.3 percent said their children connected with positive role models while they were with us," she said.

"One hundred percent said their children had fun and were positively impacted by the project."

"The youth told us the same thing, with more than 90 percent telling us they felt more hopeful about the future," she continued. "After last year's project, more than 90 percent also said they also said they had positive role models in their lives, and believed that speaking Zuni is important. All of them, 100 percent, said traditional Zuni stories are important to them."



"The first year of Covid, we transformed the delapna:we (story; singular of delapna:we) into a series of animations that we shared with the community through Zoom," she said. "People loved them, so the following year, we decided to do a movie called 'Turkey Girl.'"

Last year, we let the kids choose between storyboarding, puppets, creative writing or film.

"Now we're ready to return to the stage, and everyone is really excited for the live performance," she continued. "Our project leaders and partner organizations are currently meeting to select the stories."

These stories are priceless treasures for the Zuni people. After being shared and passed down for generations, they were in danger of being lost forever by the mid-20th century. Fortunately, the Doris Duke Foundation in New York provided necessary funding in the 1960s so the Zuni community could record 19 elders sharing more than 800 stories.

Curtis Quam, curator of the A:shiwi A:wam Museum and Heritage Center, digitized nearly 400 hours of those archived stories. He approached ZYEP in 2018 to see if there might be a way to bring the stories to life through the performing arts, which would bridge the learning gap between the elders from more than half a century ago and Zuni's younger generations.

"Those recordings captured Zuni stories from elders who are no longer with us," Natachu-Eriacho said. "It is our responsibility to care for them, and share them during the traditional winter storytelling time, so the next generation can carry them forward."



# ZYEP Art Apprentices Showcase and Sell Wares at Fall Youth Arts Market

This year's Emerging Artist Apprenticeship program at the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project came to a close this fall, and to commemorate the occasion, ZYEP offered an exciting new opportunity for the art students. It hosted a Fall Youth Arts Market at Ho'n A:wan Park on Saturday, November 10 from 1-6 p.m.

Eleven youth artists ages 16-24 showcased and sold their work at the market, including paintings, prints, traditional and contemporary pottery, traditionally sewn clothing and apparel, woven sash belts, stickers and other merchandise. All the artists were graduates of ZYEP's 2022-23 apprenticeship programs, which were made possible with support from Ancestral Rich Treasures of Zuni (ARTZ) and Administration for Native Americans (ANA).



"Friday evening was a preview event, reserved for our partners and the artists' friends and family members," said Kandis Quam, ZYEP's assistant arts coordinator. "Saturday was open for the public to browse and purchase artwork directly from our students. Each student decided what art they wanted to present and sell, and they handled their own booth."

In addition, the Fall Youth Arts Market showcased the work of the three top apprentices who recently completed the Emerging Artist Apprenticeship in sewing, which was ZYEP's final cohort of 2023. They were: Talia Wallace, Omar Tuscon, and Keely Bobelu.

"The students spent three to four weeks working on their pieces prior to the art show," said Elroy Natachu Jr., ZYEP's arts coordinator. "We provided access to our studio, equipment and supplies so they could work on their art here at ZYEP as well as at home."



Natachu said he hopes to be able to open up the youth arts market to all young people, perhaps in spring 2024. "This really was a test run so we could figure out the nuances of organizing and hosting something like this," he said. "At the moment, we're tentatively planning to do another youth arts market during the

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) event in spring, and I really would like to open it up to all youth."

The Fall Youth Arts Market was the second major art show for ZYEP art students in just four weeks. On Friday, October 13, the sewing apprentices had the opportunity to show their original work to the public at ARTZ Cooperative Gallery from 5 to 7 p.m. Ten apprentices ages 15-24 participated in the showcase.



"It was an eye-opener for them," Natachu said with a chuckle. "They learned how long it takes to sew the garments, to iron and label them, and to get them ready for sale. They didn't anticipate those stressful moments right before an art show!"

Natachu said it was a privilege to see how far the students came in their artistic journeys, particularly as their skills advanced.

"They had more confidence when their skills reached a point where they could express their own preferences and styles in their art," he explained. "Then, at the show, they had opportunities to talk about their design interpretations and the cultural connections. They answered questions. I don't think they realized how much they knew."

While the majority of the art students crafted a single garment for the show, four participants showcased sets that included a traditional dress, back scarf and an apron. One artist showcased a traditional woman's dress and a traditional man's shirt.

During the show, Natachu said the students quickly realized that traditional Zuni textiles are in high demand. "It's hard for artists to maintain inventory," he said. "At the show, we almost had bidding wars on some of the garments."



Now, the students are looking toward what comes next. Omar Tuscon is planning to study fashion at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe this fall, and Keely Bobelu just started an Advanced Artist Apprenticeship in sewing at ZYEP.

"The Advanced Artist Apprenticeships started in early November," Natachu said. "They run for 28 weeks. In addition to Keely, we have Breydon Othole pursuing an advanced apprenticeship in two-dimensional painting, and Chasady Simplicio is completing one in woven textiles."

The next Emerging Artist Apprenticeship will begin in January 2024. This program originally launched in March 2022, with the Advanced Artist Apprenticeship opportunity becoming available later that year.

ZYEP's art apprenticeships are designed to empower the next generation of Zuni artists so they can pursue careers in the arts as well as help strengthen the Pueblo of Zuni's arts economy.

While that economy has been dominated for decades by outside buyers buying low and selling high, that is changing through the rise of Native co-ops, independent businesses, and art shows.



nity members with lived experience take the lead to identify and dismantle barriers to health and well-being.”



As a prize winner, the Pueblo of Zuni will receive \$250,000, national and local promotion of the community’s stories to inspire others, and other opportunities to expand networks and accelerate progress toward building a healthy community.

For the Pueblo of Zuni, fostering a Culture of Health centers on reclaiming sovereignty by reintroducing centuries-old farming practices and working across generations to preserve language and cultural practices.

Because partners have focused their work on language and culture reclamation, they have been able to uplift culture as an avenue for achieving community health.



At the center of it all is Zuni’s deeply unifying approach. The Zuni Youth Enrichment Project collectively addresses issues such as food sovereignty, community education, cultural preservation, sustainable agriculture and gardening, and water conservation.

For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, partners worked together with the Zuni Agricultural Committee to create and distribute gardening and rain harvesting kits to over 500 families, reintroducing traditional gardening practices and providing critical resources.



## What is Influenza (flu)?



**Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory virus. It affects the nose, throat and sometimes the lungs. In some cases, may lead to pneumonia and hospitalization.**



### COMMON SYMPTOMS:

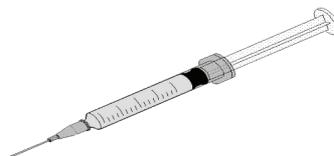
- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Chills
- ◆ Muscle aches
- ◆ Cough
- ◆ Stuffy nose
- ◆ Runny Nose
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Tiredness

### HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM THE FLU?

- ◆ Wash your hands often with soap and warm water or use hand sanitizer
- ◆ Stay home if your sick and/or stay away from sick people
- ◆ Cover your cough and/or sneezes with tissue. If no tissue use the inside of your elbow.
- ◆ Wear a mask in large crowds
- ◆ Get an influenza vaccine (flu shot) once a year

### WHY SHOULD I GET A FLU SHOT?

- ◆ Protect yourself, family, and community members by being vaccinated
- ◆ If you do get the flu after being vaccinated, the shot will protect you from getting very sick.

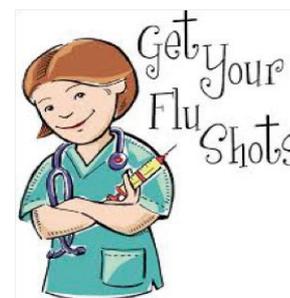


### WHO SHOULD GET THE FLU SHOT?

- ◆ Anyone age 6 months or older. Even those people with an egg allergy can get a flu shot

### WHERE CAN I GET THE FLU SHOT?

- ◆ If your between the ages of 9 to 30 years old, call Shumak’olo:wa Health Center to schedule an appointment at (505) 782-5719
- ◆ Anyone age 6 months or older can get their flu shot at Zuni Indian Hospital



For information contact the Community Health Representative (CHR) at Shumak’olo:wa Health Center (505) 782-5719

## Public Notice from Zuni Solid Waste Program



As our annual festivities winded down, there were concerns from the Zuni Solid Waste Program.

During our Shalako festival, our program went to all the sponsored areas to pick up trash. Our team came across numerous amounts of baked goods that were thrown away.

This waste of bread could have been distributed throughout our community.

Please encourage each other during times of cooking to bake only what is needed, to not bake in excess, and to eliminate such waste.

Thank you

# Zuni Little Colorado River Water Rights Settlement Update

Just over twenty years ago, the Zuni Tribe, to resolve all of the Tribe's water rights claims in the Little Colorado River (LCR) basin in Arizona and to provide a resource to restore wetland and riparian habitats, settled its water rights claims in Arizona for Kolhu:wala:wa, Zuni Heaven. Thirteen parties signed off on the settlement agreement in June of 2002.

Congress ratified and approved of the settlement through passage of the "ZUNI INDIAN TRIBE WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT ACT" on June 23, 2003 (Pub. L. 108-34, 117 Stat. 782) (the "Settlement Act"), which became fully enforceable on December 19, 2006. The primary purpose of the settlement is to restore, rehabilitate, and maintain the Zuni Heaven Reservation, including the Sacred Lake, wetland and riparian areas, in order to continue to protect the Tribe's traditional cultural practices in perpetuity.

The Settlement Act established the Zuni Indian Tribe Water Rights Development Fund (LCR Settlement Fund) held by United States on behalf of the Tribe.

Using those settlement funds from 2006 to 2023, Zuni began restoring the wetland and riparian habitats that had previously flourished and acquired lands with water rights along the LCR corridor to support the restoration goals.

During these years, among other efforts, Tribal staff have spent time maintaining the initial constructed wetland ponds, supporting the land and water rights acquisition efforts, managing the properties, requesting and monitoring the release of the Tribe's entitlement to water from Lyman Lake, and assessing the condition of the LCR channel that delivers surface water to the reservation for the wetland restoration

efforts. The Lyman water to which the Tribe has rights is based on a percentage (12%) of the water able to be stored in the lake, and varies each year, but this year, the amount released was significant and surface flows reached the reservation even without needed improvements to the LCR channel. Progress has been slow but steady toward restoration of this sacred area.

Now it is time to take another important step in the restoration and protection of Kolhu:wala:wa.

The Tribal Council, upon the recommendation and support of the LCR Wetlands Program, a program under the Division of Natural Resources, and the Tribe's Investment Committee, has determined it is in the best interest of the Tribe to withdraw the LCR Settlement Funds totaling approximately \$18 million from the federal Bureau of Trust Fund Administration and to invest those funds with the Tribe's investment firm Morgan Stanley in order to better preserve and grow the settlement funds.

In the coming days, the Tribe will submit its application under the American Indian Trust Fund Reform Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 4001, et seq.) to withdraw the LCR Settlement Funds.

**Formal notice of the Tribe's intent to withdraw its settlement funds from federal trust is found in this edition of the Messenger, below on this page.**

Withdrawal of the funds from federal trust administration will provide the Tribe broader investment opportunities than available to the United States because the federal limitations on investment of the settlement funds have limited the growth of those dollars and has slowed and delayed implementing the restoration options for the Tribe.

Through this important exercise of tribal sovereignty, we will better support tribal initiatives in furtherance of the settlement goals. The Settlement Act requires the LCR settlement funds to be used solely for the purpose of restoration, rehabilitation and maintenance of Zuni Heaven, and this commitment and obligation will not change upon withdrawal of the LCR settlement funds from federal trust.

The Tribe is committed to maintaining and protecting the Zuni Heaven area. To facilitate this commitment, the Tribe has long had in place an expenditure plan guiding the use of those settlement funds to meet the settlement objectives.

The Tribe also has had an investment policy for certain LCR settlement dollars that were not held by the United States, and these funds are currently invested under Morgan Stanley.

Now, in coordination with Morgan Stanley and Zuni's Investment Committee, the Tribal Council has developed an investment management plan incorporating its investment management policy that will provide comprehensive guidance on both investment and expenditure of all of the LCR settlement funds to accomplish the settlement objectives and maintain Kolhu:wala:wa in perpetuity.

The Tribe is fully prepared to assume the obligations of the withdrawal and management of the LCR settlement funds.

For additional information, please contact Councilman Edward Wemytewa at the Governor's Office (505) 782-7200 and/or Loren Panteah, Director of the LCR Wetlands Program at (505) 782-2123.

## Public Notice Concerning Trust Fund Withdrawal and Transfer

The Zuni Tribe is providing this notice to Members of its intent to (1) withdraw approximately \$18 million of Little Colorado River Settlement Trust Funds ("LCR Settlement Funds") from federal trust administered by the U.S. Interior Department's Bureau of Trust Fund Administration ("BTFA") and (2) transfer those funds to Tribal accounts under the professional investment management of Morgan Stanley.

The use of these LCR Trust Funds is restricted by federal and tribal law to the restoration and maintenance of Kolhu:wala:wa (Zuni Heaven Reservation). They were received by the Tribe under its Settlement Agreement with the United States, the State of Arizona and other parties of its water rights claims in the Little Colorado River basin in Arizona, which Settlement was approved by the U.S. Congress in the Zuni Indian Tribe Water Settlement Act of 2003.

The purposes of the withdrawal of the LCR Settlement Funds from federal trust and transfer to professional investment management of Morgan Stanley are (1) to permit a wider range of investment options than are currently allowed to BTFA under federal law, (2) to allow a broader diversification of investments, which is expected to better protect principal and enhance earnings on the LCR Settlement Funds over time based upon generally recognized investment principles, and (3) establish professional man-

agement by Morgan Stanley in expectation of greater investment returns than, historically, through federal management.

The Governor and Tribal Council anticipate that this strategic plan will enhance the amount of financial resources available to fund the necessary actions to restore, rehabilitate, and maintain the Zuni Heaven Reservation, including the Sacred Lake, wetlands, and riparian areas.

Upon approval of the Tribe's application to withdraw the LCR Settlement Funds from federal trust under BTFA's administration and transfer them to tribal accounts under Morgan Stanley's professional investment management pursuant to the American Indian Trust Fund Reform Act and associated Regulations, the Tribe and not the United States Government (a) will be responsible for management, administration, investment and use of the withdrawn LCR Settlement Funds, (b) will directly bear any investment loss with respect to such funds, and (c) will assume liability for any mismanagement or misuse of such funds. Neither BTFA, the Interior Department, nor any other Department or Agency of the U.S. Government will have any continuing responsibility or liability with respect to the management, administration, investment, or use of such funds.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please address them to the Governor's office.

*Ancestral Trails continues from page 1*

BCBSNM's Blue Impact grant is part of an ongoing commitment to invest in and collaborate with community organizations that offer sustainable, measurable programs that address the social and economic factors impacting health and wellness in our state.

ZYEP's mission, to promote resilience among Zuni youth so they grow into strong and healthy adults connected to Zuni traditions, aligns with the vision of Blue Impact to improve health outcomes in communities across New Mexico.

"Spending active time outdoors is essential to our mental and physical well-being," said Janice Torrez, BCBSNM president.

"We're proud to support the health and well-being of Zuni residents by investing in programs that provide easy and safe access to outdoor trails and activities."



# Key Private Property in Bears Ears National Monument to Be Protected Forever

## Conservancy Acquisition Could Set New Standard for Private Lands Conservation in Utah

After a 16-month effort, the most important parcel of private land surrounded by Bears Ears National Monument has been permanently protected by The Wildlands Conservancy.

The 320-acre Cottonwood Wash property controls access to thousands of acres of the surrounding public lands inside Bears Ears National Monument. The property is critically important to the management of those lands, including access for cultural site stewardship and ceremony, research, restoration, education, hiking and nature enjoyment. It also has enormous biological significance.

A spring-fed pond, hanging gardens, and riparian forest along Cottonwood Wash support endemic plants and a variety of resident and migratory birds.

“As soon as we stepped foot on the property and recognized its incredible importance, we were dedicated to saving it,” said Frazier Haney, executive director of the California-based conservancy. “While it is surrounded by Bears Ears, the property was drawn out of the monument’s boundary, so acquisition by a private organization is the only real way to see it permanently protected.”

After years of collaborative efforts among Tribal nations, conservation organizations, archaeologists and other stakeholders, on December 28, 2016, President Obama used his authority under the Antiquities Act to designate Bears Ears National Monument. The Inter-Tribal Coalition — Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, Ute Indian Tribe, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Zuni Pueblo — played a leading role in advocating for the monument’s protection. Tribal leadership continues in its management, formalized in the signing of a June 2022 cooperative management agreement.

“The entire Bears Ears region is the ancestral landscape of the Zuni people,” said Anthony Sanchez, Jr., head councilman and Bears Ears commissioner for the Zuni Pueblo Tribe and representative of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition. “We are a part of this place because our songs, prayers, and stories connect us to various landmarks across the region. We know our ancestors resided and traveled through here because various places, plants, and rock markings in Bears Ears are embedded in our cultural memory.”

The Wildlands Conservancy closed escrow on the Cottonwood Wash property on July 14. A cultural conservation easement over the land will be created in favor of the five Tribes of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition. The easement will end future development rights, return the right of access for ceremony and plant gathering, and provide for co-management of the property.

“The Cottonwood Wash property is an important part of the greater Bears Ears landscape; not only does it hold beautiful scenery, but it also instills in time the cultural significance of learning and connection we have as Pueblos,” said Sanchez. “Protecting these connections ensures that our children can have the whole experience, echoing our continuous existence since time immemorial, thereby allowing the protection of our cultural and spiritual values.”

The cultural conservation easement is the first of its kind in Utah and one of the first such partnerships in the nation. It brings together a private nonprofit and Tribal nations, each with a real interest in the property, to protect the land. This builds on many cooperative efforts already established by nonprofit groups and Tribal nations to protect the area’s public lands. “Because of our unique model of permanent land stewardship that engages visitors and partners, our preserves benefit the public lands that often surround them,” said Dave Herrero, who will manage the preserve for the conservancy. “Over the last year, we’ve



A spring-fed pond on the Cottonwood Wash property. Photo credit: Frazier Haney, The Wildlands Conservancy

been working to cultivate relationships in the region and are humbled by the generous support from more than 200 organizations, foundations, and individuals, for not only the acquisition of the Cottonwood Wash property, but also the future stewardship of the land.”

The town of Bluff, its residents and the Bears Ears Partnership were integral to building momentum and gathering support for the project. Additional funding for the conservancy’s acquisition of Cottonwood Wash came from the Kisco Cares Foundation, Earthwalker Fund, Alnoba Lewis Family Foundation, David Kelby Johnson Memorial Foundation, the Conservation Alliance and Grand Canyon Trust.

“The importance of the Cottonwood Wash property can’t be overstated. The canyon is not only stunning, it cradles hundreds of generations of human history within its walls,” said Tim Peterson, cultural landscapes director for Grand Canyon Trust. “Given that it could have been closed off and peppered with luxury homes, we are grateful that it will be forever preserved and co-managed with the Bears Ears Tribes.”

The Center for Biological Diversity was an early supporter of the conservancy’s purchase of the property, the third acquisition in recent years in which the two nonprofit organizations have partnered. The Center and other conservation groups sued the Trump administration to protect Bears Ears and intervened to stop Utah’s efforts to gut the Antiquities Act.

“We’re thrilled to support the conservancy’s bold step to expand its preserve system into Utah and build a

meaningful partnership with Tribal nations to protect this extraordinary place,” said Peter Galvin, director of programs and a cofounder of the Center. “The Center has been fighting for years to safeguard Bears Ears and protecting spectacular Cottonwood Wash is a critical step.”

The conservancy is now focused on next steps, including securing the property, providing pedestrian access, planning ecological restoration, and engaging with local partners.

More about the Cottonwood Wash acquisition is on The Wildlands Conservancy website.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.7 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

Founded in 1995, The Wildlands Conservancy is dedicated to preserving the beauty and biodiversity of the earth and providing programs so that children may know the wonder and joy of nature.

In working to achieve this mission, the conservancy has established the largest nonprofit nature preserve system in the West, comprising 24 preserves encompassing nearly 200,000 acres of diverse mountain, valley, desert, river, and coastal landscapes.

These preserves are open to the public free of charge for passive recreation and host free outdoor education programs for underserved youth.