



Update on the Zuni River Basin Adjudication and Zuni Water Rights Settlement

In a prior article in the *A:shiwí A:wán Messenger*, information was provided that the Tribe's Zuni River Basin (ZRB) Water Rights Settlement Agreement with the State of New Mexico was signed and executed, and will become enforceable when Congress passes federal legislation acknowledging the Tribe's water rights claims.

It was also reported that the Tribe's water rights lawyers are developing federal legislation with the federal water rights lawyers in moving forward to achieve this important legislation.

Additionally, it was stated that work will still entail an unknown timeframe of federal negotiations in developing such federal legislation, but that we are optimistic that it will be a favorable outcome for the Tribe.

As the settlement agreement was executed with the State of New Mexico and sent to the Department of Interior for development of federal

Water Rights continues next page

Suicide Prevention & Advocacy for Students

In the fall semester of 2023, I, Mackenna Epaloose, was given the opportunity to work in the 'Work Based Learning Internship.' From that point on, I was placed at the Shumak'olawa Health Center to work with an amazing leader and mentor, Marnella Kucate-Yepa. In honor of Suicide Awareness Month, I was assigned a project by my mentor to spread awareness on the issue at school.

My original idea for this project was to create a pledge for suicide prevention called "A Pledge of Hope." This idea aimed to solicit feedback from students at school. See the next page for "A Pledge of Hope", which can be cut out, copied, and shared.

When proposing this idea to the school administration, they suggested that in order for my project to be more effective, and to reach a bigger audience, I should create a survey and share information pulled from the survey with all students and faculty at Zuni High School and Twin Buttes Cyber Academy.

I then constructed a survey that consisted of 12 questions, all of which addressed students' mental health, awareness and knowledge regarding the issue of suicide. This survey was then administered to each student on September 12, 2023 during our 3rd period class. From this survey I received a total

of 176 responses, of the 378 students within the two schools.

Key survey questions included, "Have you ever thought about suicide or expressed suicidal ideation recently (in the past 6 months)?" From this question, 138 students (78.4% of survey respondents) stated that they had not experienced or expressed suicidal ideation recently, while 38 students (21.6% of survey respondents) had experienced or expressed suicidal ideation.

Once I gathered and analyzed the data, I created a brief PowerPoint presentation that was provided to ZHS and TBCA students and staff. In the presentation, I shared the aforementioned data, resources and contacts for students to reach out to when they need help, and my personal insight regarding the collective predicament. I also made it a priority to share why everyone should appreciate their lives and love themselves for who they are in the very present moment.

"Your mental health is important, and even if you know this I am here to remind you that well-balanced mental health can be attributed to stress management, emotional stability and constructive coping mechanisms. I encourage all of you

Prevention & Advocacy continues next page

Two Zunis Win \$5000 Education Awards

The Melani McCullough Memorial Education Fund would like to announce our first two recipients of \$5000 awards, Jacqueline Edaakie and Lakisha Leekela.

Jacqueline recently graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition & Dietetics from the University of New Mexico.

She is currently completing a dietetics internship at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she is also taking graduate courses towards a master's degree, and studying for the creden-

Education Fund continues next page

Melani McClullough Memorial Education Fund Award winners Jacqueline Edaaki, left, and Lakisha Leekela



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to start the conversation, although suicide and mental health may be an uncomfortable topic.”

“Sometimes, being uncomfortable isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It can bring about character development and self-discovery. It’s important to recognize that by talking about it we reduce the stigma, and by expressing compassion and empathy we collectively create a safe space for individuals to express how they feel and access the help or resources they need.”

tialing exam to become a registered dietician nutritionist (RDN).

Lakisha graduated in May from Zuni High School, and just started her freshman year in the Biology program at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. She plans to complete pre-med requirements and enter medical school after completion of her undergraduate degree.

We are raising money for our next scholarship awards! Donations can be made in the following ways:

By mail: Melani McCullough Memorial Education Fund, PO Box 1249, Zuni, NM 87327

Venmo: [@melanimcculloughfund](https://www.venmo.com/melanimcculloughfund)

Online: bit.ly/melanifund (via Paypal, credit card, or debit card)



legislation, work still continued and continues with the State of New Mexico, Office of State Engineers (OSE) regarding the ZRB and Zuni Salt Lake (ZSL). These efforts aim to further protect the ZRB and ZSL from additional development that may impact groundwater and surface water flows pertinent to the Tribe’s water rights claims as acknowledged by the State of New Mexico. In these additional protection measures acknowledging the Tribe’s water right claims, the OSE issued two Closure Orders, one each for the Zuni River Basin and the Zuni Salt Lake Basin.

The Tribe’s water rights lawyers and technical consultants spent several months working with the State of New Mexico actively negotiating for additional protection measures for the ZRB and ZSL confines. Through lengthy discussion and negotiations, the Tribe reached another milestone where the OSE approved these additional protection measures by issuing these closure

FIRST NAME:

GRADE:

WHAT’S IS ONE WORD THAT KEEPS YOU HOPEFUL?

“ASKING FOR HELP IS NOT A SIGN OF WEAKNESS. IT IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH”

orders. However, as these closure orders are temporary for a certain timeframe, the Tribe’s water rights team are continually working to make these orders permanent. Through this article, I would like to again commend the diligent work of the Zuni team assisting the Tribe in the quantification of its water rights claims and additional protection measures to protect such water right claims of the Tribe in perpetuity. The current Zuni team consists of the Tribe’s Water Rights Program, former Tribal Water Resources hydrologist, now an independent consultant, Kirk Bemis, Water Rights lawyer Jane Marx and Josh Mann, Tribe’s General Counsel, David Meilke, technical consultants GZA GeoEnvironmental Inc. (Glorieta Geoscience Inc.), Paul Drakos, Meghan Hodgins, James Riesterer and Abbey Guidry.

These Closure Orders issued by the State of New Mexico for the ZRB and ZSL can be seen in the State of New Mexico’s OSE Website, Zuni River Basin Closure Order 197, order signed June 30, 2023, and Zuni Salt Lake Closure Order 199, order

signed July 5th, 2023. Generally, both closure orders stipulate closure to new appropriations of groundwater and surface water under State of New Mexico Statutes except where it relates to new livestock and domestic water wells. The text of these closures can be found on the website of the State of New Mexico Office of State Engineer. There, click “Water Rights Lookup”, then “Special Orders”, then look under “Closures” for Order 197 for ZRB, and Order 199 for ZSL.

The mission of the Zuni Water Rights Program (WRP) is to adjudicate and protect all the water resources of the Zuni Tribe for the benefit of tribal members, present and future generations. The WRP will continue to work to protect any potential impacts to all water resources of the Tribe by involving its expert water right attorneys and technical consultants. For more information contact the Water Rights Program at (505) 782-2123. Future updates and milestones will be circulated in future publications of the *Messenger*.

A:shiwi College and Career Readiness Center Celebrates Recent Graduates, and Builds Through Community Partnerships

A:shiwi Tribal College is founded on its Vision and Mission statements.

Our Vision

We believe culturally responsive education inspires and empowers Zuni people and all students to live the lives of their dreams.

Our Mission

We are dedicated to honoring and supporting each individual student. We provide accredited academic programs based on Zuni and Indigenous values and coordinate our academic calendar with tribal and cultural ceremonial practices. Our leadership and staff are fully qualified to design and implement culturally supportive academic, career and family based entrepreneurial programming.

Within our vision and mission statements, our staff work collaboratively in events that support student learning, community engagement, and nation building.

Our school has graduated students earning Certificates, Associate's, and Bachelor's degrees.

Recent NTU/ATC Graduates

Fall 2022:

Reanna Kanteena – Certificate in Administration Office Specialist

Vanessa Yuselew – Associate's Degree in Informational Technology Technician

Spring 2023:

Jerika Lementino – Bachelor's in Early Childhood Multicultural Education

Bridgett Thomas – Bachelor's in Early Childhood Multicultural Education

Fall 2023:

Bernelia Boone – Bachelor's in Early Childhood Multicultural Education

Tina Bowannie – Associate's Degree in Substance Abuse; Associate's Degree in Suicide Crisis Management

Lynn Bowannie – Certificate in Informational Technology Technician

Alisha Kaskalla – Certificate in Administration Office Specialist

Congratulate, graduates!

In addition to academics, A:shiwi Tribal College, the Zuni Tribal Council, and the Zuni Language Board are proud to lead projects that support the efforts of language and cultural revitalization within the community.

Building plans for a Zuni Immersion Micro School for Pre-K students aim to break ground in the spring of 2024. The development of the college and the immersion school are based on Zuni Language and ancestral knowledge, which enable practices of educational sovereignty and promote academic success among Zuni students and community members.

Importance of community connections with the college

As we go through the struggles of college life and home life, as well as anything in between, we either grow apart or grow together. A:shiwi Tribal College builds on the belief that community involvement is essential to help create and expand support for

our growing college populations. Without our community we would not have the opportunity to be here, where we are today, and where we are headed.

A:shiwi Tribal College is a place where community members individually and together can grow, from learning how to use computers, to studying for careers and learning how to be entrepreneurs in today's quickly changing world.

Success of the Halloween Carnival

A:shiwi Tribal College's first Halloween Carnival, photo below, was a success, with 9 booths and fun activities such as guessing trivia, a ring toss, a sock relay and thread spool toss.

Rockin' Life Suicide Awareness & Prevention set up with their drums and music.

The presentation given by the Zuni High School Students were very informative on teen vaping, alcoholism and diabetes. This was their 3rd presentation, and they were skilled and knowledgeable about the information they presented.

A big thank you to: NTU Recruitment, NTU Counseling Services, Shumak'olowa Center, A:Shiwi Sewing Class, IHS Women's Health, Rockin' Life Suicide Awareness & Prevention, Ashley Baked Goods, and to the community for coming out and participating in this fun event.

We look forward to having more fun events and seeing more of the community on our campus.

To learn more about your local college, call 782-6010, visit www.ashwicollege.org, or – best of all! – stop by the campus, adjacent to Zuni High School on Route 301.

Don a:widu.



Zuni Youth Enrichment Project Partners with ZPSD to Offer In-School and After-School Programs

The 2023-24 school year is under way, which means the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project and Zuni Public School District are once again collaborating to offer both in-school and after-school programming for the community's young people. These include a holistic wellness class at Shiwi Ts'ana Elementary School, an art elective at Zuni Middle School, and the "Rooted in Healthy Traditions" after-school program.

At the elementary level, what began as a performing arts class during the school day has evolved to incorporate all aspects of wellness. According to Kiara "Kiki" Zunie, ZYEP's youth development coordinator, this transition has been a welcome development for staff and students alike.

"It's a great approach, because it allows us to dive into so many different topics, including mental health and self-care," she explained. "I was so excited to plan the curriculum with Rani (Yamute-wa, one of ZYEP's youth development leaders), and we're grateful to Principal Janis Bowekaty for her support."

The class, made possible with assistance from the New Mexico Department of Health, incorporates physical activity, food sovereignty education, and the "Eat Smart To Play Hard" state curriculum, as well as traditional storytelling, traditional dance and music. The ZYEP team also incorporates art as a way for children, especially the younger ones, to process how they are feeling.



"The young kids will draw to express what makes them happy, for example," Zunie said. "The older students are more hesitant, but they do want to talk. So we'll have a talking circle and give them a chance to explore questions like, 'How do I turn my day around?' We let them know this is a safe space, where everyone is welcome to share."

"As they process their emotions, they learn how to put them into words," she continued. "A lot of our work revolves around reflection, and encouraging them to think about how they want to take care of their present and future selves."

Next, with support from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the New Mexico Behavioral Health

Services Division, and Dr. Dominique Dosedo, Zuni Middle School principal, and her ZMS team, the nonprofit youth project is partnering with 8th grade teacher Bryston Bowannie to offer an elective class that focuses on building resilience through art. Scheduled to be part of the regular school day, the elective is offered twice per year and rotates through three subjects: traditional dance, food sovereignty and art.



ZYEP Arts Leader Liam Simplicio is leading the class with assistance from ZYEP Arts Coordinator Elroy Natachu Jr. and Arts Assistant Coordinator Kandis Quam. The students are learning art foundations, such as drawing, shading, forms and colors. They're also learning about the connections between art and traditional culture and the impact of art on daily Zuni life.

"It's awesome to see the way Liam approaches the instruction, and I love the partnership with Bryston," Zunie said. "Nearly half of the 18 students in the elective are new to art, and it's wonderful to see them understanding it and getting into it. It's their first class in the morning, so it gives them a chance to let out their feelings and stress through art, and then get on with their day."



Finally, fall semester also is the time for "Rooted in Healthy Traditions," ZYEP's 10-week after-school program at Shiwi Ts'ana Elementary. It is made possible with support from the CDC's Tribal Practices for Wellness in Indian Country and the New Mexico Department of Health.

The program takes place every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 3 to 5 p.m. During each session, children participate in physical activity and special focus areas that include traditional art, knowledge sharing, and food sovereignty. Forty-four children in third through fifth grades are currently participating, with two mentors assigned to each grade level.

Fifth-graders comprise the largest group with 19 children. At press time, a few spots were still available for third- and fourth-graders; middle-schoolers will have their opportunity to participate in RHT once this 10-week session at Shiwi Ts'ana Elementary concludes.

"Our 10-week timeframe is new this year," Zunie said. "We extended the program by four weeks, and we believe so much good will come from that. It was great to see that the kids missed us! Some of them have participated for multiple years now, so we're seeing them grow up with ZYEP programming."

"They're comfortable with us, they can vocalize their needs — they've been taking in the lessons," she reflected. "Someday they might become youth leaders, and then they might even join our team. That is the dream."



EXPLORE

The New Street Names

NEW PHYSICAL ADDRESSES & ROAD NAMES COMING TO ZUNI



Whats changing?

Pueblo of Zuni administration passed the Zuni Master Street Address Guide which will allow our community standardize the 911 streets by adding new road names within the community.



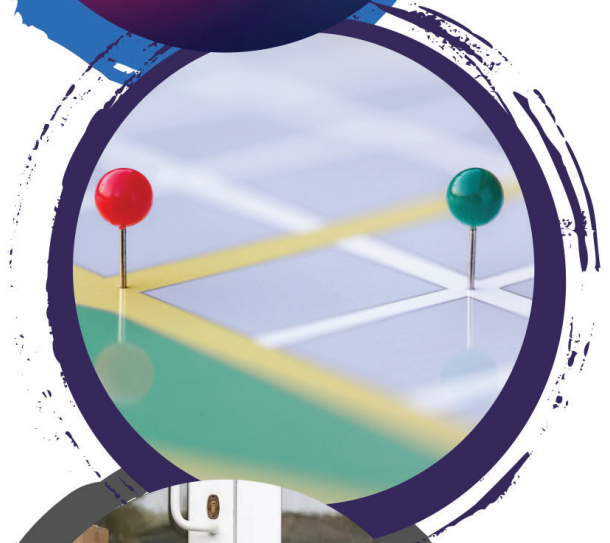
When will it change?

2023 will bring new changes in our neighborhoods with new house numbers and street names. Changes will be made throughout the entire year.



What should I do?

The new address will require tenants to update their state issued identification cards, financial institutions, finance companies and other companies that require address verification.



STAY POSTED, MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON...

CONTACT US

Quentin Lallo
GIS Technician

Monday - Friday 8am-5pm
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ZYEP Art Apprentices Reflect on Their First Grand Canyon Cultural Demonstration Program

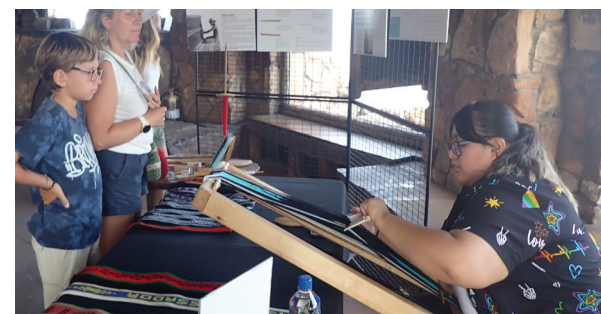
On August 22-24, three young artists from the Pueblo of Zuni had the opportunity to share their culture, history and traditional arts with the public through the Grand Canyon Cultural Demonstration Program. They are LaShea Harris, 24; Chasady Simplicio, 19; and Cassandra Tsalate, 21.

All three young people participated in the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project's Emerging Artist Apprenticeship program, and Harris and Tsalate also completed the Advanced Artist Apprenticeship program. Kandis Quam, ZYEP's assistant art coordinator, chaperoned the trip.

"We monitor our art students to see who has the capabilities to do something like this," said Elroy Natachu Jr., ZYEP's art coordinator. "We're looking for young people with a solid work ethic and mental fortitude. They need to be motivated, self-driven, and able to push outside their comfort zone. With these three, we saw that light."

The free cultural demonstrations took place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily at various locations at and around Desert View Watchtower, the eastern-most developed area along the park's South Rim. The artists also conducted demonstrations for other youth at Grand Canyon High School; in both cases, the artists said they appreciated the opportunities to engage with the public.

"I was nervous at first, but I really liked talking to people," said Simplicio, who creates traditional Zuni Pueblo weaving. "People wanted to know how long it takes to produce a piece. I explained that it depends on the weaver, and on the design. One woman was so interested in our weaving process; she had her own small loom to fix socks. I thought that was cool!"



The three artists shared living quarters while in residence at Grand Canyon National Park, and Simplicio noted this gave the trio opportunities to get to know each other better.

"We talked about meaning, color and design in our work," they remembered. "I learned a lot from LaShea and Cassandra."

Harris said she also felt "a lot of nerves" before the program started, in part because she embarked on her journey with traditional Zuni embroidery just a year ago.

"It was a little bit intimidating, but I enjoyed sharing what I knew," she recalled. "It was a popular time for European tourists, and we introduced them to Zuni art."

"I was trying not to be nervous," said Tsalate, who produces Zuni Pueblo pottery, with a laugh. "I told

myself it was like trying to teach someone here at home. The ranger told us to ask ourselves, what is one thing we can leave them with?"

"So, I talked about the significance of these traditional arts in our culture, and what revitalizing them means for the future of our people," she continued. "I also talked about being passionate about culture and history. That's what makes me motivated... the history! Hopefully we inspired others." Indeed, through the cultural demonstration program, these young artists became teachers for peers and adults alike. Natachu said this is vital for the future of the Zuni people.

"Our art forms are culturally rooted," he explained. "They share how we view the world. They show it through our Zuni lens. Without future culture bearers, the knowledge of these traditional art forms will be lost — the artistic processes, and what they were meant for."

Tsalate said she hopes the cultural demonstration program encouraged others to embrace their talents, especially women. And, back home, she hopes more Zuni youth will get more deeply involved with art and culture.

To that end, Harris said ZYEP's Emerging Artist Apprenticeship Program is a good place for young people to start exploring their interests, passions and talents in the arts. The program not only provides art instruction, it also connects young artists with experienced mentors who can help guide them on their artistic journeys.



"Our experience at the Grand Canyon shows how far the apprenticeships can take you," Harris observed. "You never know what doors will open. It's great that ZYEP offers these opportunities, exposing youth to different arts and showing them that they can do it."

While the group were able to visit a few of the tourist sites along the South Rim during their stay, their main focus was their artwork and strengthening connections to their roots in a place that is sacred to the Zuni people.

"It was so scenic, and there was the cultural significance as well," Harris said. "It felt different to do my embroidery there. I felt closer to our ancestors."

Grand Canyon has been home to 11 tribes for generations, which means it is more than a national park, a World Heritage Site and a natural wonder of the world. It's also a sacred space for entire peoples: Havasupai, Hualapai, Hopi, Yavapai-Apache, Kaibab band of Southern Paiute, Las Vegas band of Southern Paiute, Moapa band of Southern Paiute, Paiute Indian Tribes of Utah, San Juan South-

ern Paiute Tribe, and Zuni.

The purpose of the Cultural Demonstration Program is to give members of those 11 traditionally associated tribes a voice at Grand Canyon by supporting interactions with the public through demonstrations of traditional Native practices and crafts. Made possible by grants from the Grand Canyon Conservancy, the program began in 2014 and continues to grow.

Now that she is back home, Harris said she is planning to take time to create something new. As she takes on larger embroidery projects, she is dedicated to further developing her own style.

Simplicio agreed, noting they plan to continue working on their weaving and learning more advanced techniques.

"I want to help my community by inspiring others, and showing them that you can make it as an artist, even if you're a young person," they said. "It's always worth it to try something new."

As for Tsalate, continuing with her pottery is one piece of a larger puzzle. Not only would she like to explore other mediums, like jewelry and basketry, she is pursuing an education in museum studies.

"I want to teach history," she explained. "It's so important. I want to open up conversations with our elders and encourage them to teach, as well."



"I also want to be in touch with other artists, people of all ages," she continued. "It's about bringing our community together, and improving access to outside resources like museums and national parks. I'm just so inspired."

After this first experience with the Grand Canyon Cultural Demonstration Program, Natachu said he anticipates that this will become a regular part of ZYEP arts programming.

"We need to support the young people who have the capability to carry the torch into the future," he said. "They must take our places one day."



Zuni Youth Enrichment Project Launches New Dance Medicine Program



On Friday, September 15, the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project launched a seven-week community program designed to bring people together for an hour of movement and music. Called O:dip'sheh, or Dance Medicine, the free program is held every Friday from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in Ho'n A:wan Park, and it will conclude on Friday, October 27.

Seventy-four community members are registered to date, and new participants are always welcome. On opening night, ZYEP welcomed community members as well as youth, family and friends from neighboring communities; Zuni Royalty also were in attendance. Then, on the second Friday of the program, the youth project welcomed Cloud Eagle Drum Group from Jemez Pueblo.

Behind Dance Medicine is Kenzi Bowekaty, one of ZYEP's food sovereignty leaders. Bowekaty observed the positive community energy during the Zumba dance activities at last year's Buddy Walk and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Walk, and she said she quickly realized her community needs

more opportunities like these.

"After being on pause during Covid, I think we've all been missing each other and missing that connection," she reflected. "We need to come together, to be together. And, we love to dance and sing!"

This summer, Bowekaty came up with the idea of bringing community members together weekly to listen and dance to traditional music. While attending the NB3 Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures conference, she attended a presentation by Anthony Fleg, founder of Running Medicine; she said his perspective, experience and success inspired her.

"Dance Medicine was just a dream at the time, but with that motivation, it helped bring the dream to life," she said.

A program of the Native Health Initiative, Running Medicine is based on the understanding that movement is a powerful medicine for mind, body and spirit. It also encourages a culture of wellness through a supportive, loving community.

"Dance Medicine is aligned with Running Medicine

in that way," Bowekaty said. "We shared the same perspective. We find medicines we need in movement, and within each other."

Each session of Dance Medicine begins with stretching and meditation, accompanied by slower songs. Then the upbeat music begins, allowing participants of all ages and abilities to jump and dance.

"Some people love to exercise, but they don't want to do cardio, and traditional social dancing isn't an option," Bowekaty said. "Dance Medicine changes that."

"We all end in a circle as well, with more stretching and meditation," she continued. "After the stretching, the whole circle comes to meet one another, to thank each and every individual for sharing their medicine and also to share good words of encouragement."

Bowekaty said she and the ZYEP team also are planning to hold a 2nd annual Buddy Walk/Zumba event for Down Syndrome awareness in late October. More details to follow.



ZYEP Opens Registration for Popular “Family Cook Nights” Series

On Wednesday, October 11, the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project opened registration for its popular “Family Cook Nights” series, which give Zuni families opportunities to learn how to prepare multiple-course meals using plant-based ingredients.

Free and open to the public, the first event took place on October 26, and two more remain, on November 16 and December 12.

Each Family Cook Night incorporates an entree, a side dish and a dessert. Last fall, families learned to make black bean tacos with red and green taco sauce, and fruit salad with honey-lime and mint dressing; homemade pizza, fresh garden salad with dressing, and pumpkin par-faits; and sweet potato and black bean soup with avocado and tortilla strips, cornbread, and baked apples with crumble and ice cream.

“We gear the recipes to our harvested produce and what’s in season, and then we provide all the ingredients and a cooking kit to each registered family,” explained Brittny Seowtewa, ZYEP’s Food Sovereignty coordinator. “We can accommodate 15 families in each session — three in person, and 12 through Zoom.”

She noted that, in post-program surveys, families indicated they enjoyed cooking together, spending quality time together, and seeing their children’s excitement. The multigenerational program and the kits received 90- and 100-percent approval ratings, respectively.

Family Cook Nights are a key element of the ZYEP Food Sovereignty initiative, which is made possible with support from the Center for Science in the Public Interest, Native American Agriculture Fund, New Mexico Department of Health, Newman’s Own Foundation, Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance, and 7th Generation Fund. This year’s fall series is coming on the heels of another successful summer season, which included multiple free workshops for the Zuni community.

On June 14, the Water Conservation Workshop drew roughly 50 families to learning stations that involved games, educational activities, and the sharing of important cultural knowledge. All families went home with shade cloths for their gardens.



Approximately 40 families attended the Pest Management Workshop on July 12. They learned about fencing, do’s and don’ts, and beneficial insects versus pests; they played games including “Pin the Tail on the Prairie Dog”; they designed seed-saving boxes and pots; and they took home bottles of ZYEP’s organic pest-control formula.

At the Healthy Recipes Workshop on August 23, 64 people learned to make traditional chili patties, parched corn, and tomatillo salsa verde. They also played a healthy version of “Cake Walk,” competing to win fresh fruits and vegetables.

“The kids loved it,” Seowtewa said. “We had such a good turnout, because in addition to our gardening families, we had curious families coming from our soccer and flag football leagues as well.”

ZYEP staff set up an arts and crafts table too, giving families an opportunity to decorate pieces of wood for the nonprofit youth project’s mobile vegetable garden. By the end of the evening, 13 creative new panels adorned the garden on wheels.

“We pulled the mobile garden into our front parking lot, and the families went out to see the crops we have growing — green chilis, cilantro, and sugar snap peas,” recalled Zachary James, ZYEP’s Food Sovereignty specialist.



To wrap up the 2023 workshop series, the youth project hosted two seed-saving workshops. They took place on Sept. 13 and Oct. 11, respectively.



At the first workshop, 16 families learned about seeds and modern seed-saving techniques, participated in a seed-matching game for prizes, learned to germinate seeds at home, and created more decorations for the mobile vegetable garden. Children were able to add their handprints, as well.

“Zach and Kailin Quam, our Food Sovereignty intern, went with them,” Seowtewa said. “They had fun getting messy, and they could put their handprints wherever they wanted on the wooden boards.”

At the second workshop, which closed out the 2023 workshop series, 15 people learned about the significance of non-GMO seeds, the benefits of traditional seeds and seed-saving, and how to process and save corn, including grinding the corn for cornmeal and also how to use corn husks. In addition, they made seed boxes for their own seed collections.

In years past, the workshops were only open to families registered for ZYEP gardening kits. This year, the youth project opted to open them up to the public. “It was the right decision, and we had a great year,” James said. We got people of all different ages, and we got so many questions. When we share knowledge and grow together, it’s a never-ending learning experience for all of us.”

“We definitely will keep our workshops open to the public in 2024,” Seowtewa added.

This month, ZYEP and Zuni’s gardening families completed their harvesting in advance of Zuni’s first frost. At Ho’n A:wan Park, the harvest included red corn, melons, cilantro, cucumbers and beans.

“This growing season was a challenging one,” James said. “For two years, we were blessed with an abundance of rain. This year, we didn’t get as much, and the heat really had an impact. We needed shade cloths to prevent the sun from burning the plants. Some of the gardens here didn’t do well.

“It was a learning experience, and it will help us get ready for next year,” he continued. “We know we’re seeing harsher summers, and earlier frosts in October, so we have to adapt. We need to show our kids that this doesn’t mean we give up — it means that we learn, we problem-solve, and we are resilient.”