NHI Loveletter!

Welcome!

In the midst of the pandemic at this time, our Native Health Initiative (NHI) organization has come to rise to its greatest foundation of service - LOVE. We have come to find a place in our serving hearts to continue to provide the Loving Service (the human-to-human element of wanting to serve others) from a distance.

We hope that we can offer that Love through our weekly emails, NHI Loving Service Support (Covid-19 relief response), and program activities.

As one NHI leader said, "We are creating community connections and social support through virtual services, even if we can not meet up in person". There are several examples of what NHI has created at this time, as well as past events, and we want to share this with our participants, communities, health partners, and donors. THANK YOU!

Happy 15th Birthday NHI!!!

NHI Birthday Week!! June 15, 2005 was the day NHI was created - 15 years of loving service and love-grounded activism!
Growing NHI Board - New Members

By: Brittany Simmons
NHI Board President

Welcome Christy and Melvin!

The NHI Advisory Board is pleased to announce the addition of Christy Chapman and Melvin Monette to the board. The Advisory Board strives to provide oversight and support to NHI’s programming and Christy and Melvin are two exemplary examples of Loving Service.

Christy Chapman (Zuni Pueblo) is an attorney who works with the Native American Budget and Policy Institute. She serves as a Guardian Ad Litem with Pegasus Legal Services for Children. She has also worked as a nurse in her pueblo. In addition, she is a Peacemaker and values the use of indigenous knowledge and indigenous dispute resolution to resolve issues.

Ms. Chapman’s Publication:

The Advisory Board knows that Christy and Melvin will bring their unique perspective and expertise to NHI as the organization continues to grow. The Advisory Board still has open positions. If you are interested in joining, please email Brittany Schulman at brittanyeschulman@gmail.com.

Melvin E Monette-Barajas is Ojibwe, an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, and serves as Chief Executive Officer for Indigenous Education, Inc. Home to the Cobell Scholarship Program. Melvin attended elementary school at the Ojibwa Indian School in Belcourt, ND, High School at the Four Winds Community High School in Ft Totten, ND and then attended both the Cankdeska Cikana and Turtle Mountain Community Colleges (both tribal colleges) before graduating from the University of North Dakota with both a bachelor’s and master’s in Education and Leadership. With a
career dedicated to higher education student affairs he has served American Indian students at the University of North Dakota, the Minnesota Department of Education Office of Indian Education, The University of Minnesota School of Public Health, The American Indian Graduate Center and now Indigenous Education, Inc. As a gay-identified man, Melvin volunteered for the MSM community in ND and MN conducting HIV and STD intervention trainings to small groups; and sat on a NM HIV Task Force. In education, Melvin served the National Indian Education Association as a Board Member and President; and has served as Chair and Co-Chair for the Native American Network of the American College Personnel Association. Currently, Melvin sits on the National Congress of American Indians Two-Spirit Force. Melvin and his husband John have 2 daughters and 4 grandsons with whom they spend most of their free time at their home in Albuquerque, NM where they also care for John’s elderly mother. Most recently, Melvin has joined a Turtle Mountain Members in New Mexico Beading Group to re-learn beading skills and socialize with people from “home”. “I am eager to learn more about NHI and begin serving wherever the organization needs me to serve.”

Spring 2020 Program Updates:

Healers of Tomorrow (HOT):

HOT is an 8-month health career exploration program for underrepresented high school youth in NM. It is a youth-driven community health project.

The Healers Of Tomorrow program had an an enrollment of about 5 high school youth participating prior to pandemic. There were also about 5 mentors. Throughout the pandemic, the H.O.T. program moved forward with virtual participation.

As a result, 3 successfully completed the H.O.T. Graduation:

- Emelia Pino
- Daniel Feng
- Edgar Cabrera

HOT Program Student Spotlight - Emelia Pino. From shy student, to future leader. One of the highlights of the Healers of Tomorrow program of the Native Health Initiative is watching our youth grow in confidence and address health concerns in their communities. Currently a junior at Bernalillo high school and a
proud member of Zia Pueblo, her initiative and dedication to her community has been inspiring others. She was asked to serve as a HOT Coordinator for 2020-21 school year. Yes, she will now be leading the program she just graduated from as a high school student!!! Emelia’s desire is to inspire other students from Zia to further their involvement in the community and has interests in Pediatrics and applying to UNM’s BA/MD program.

Breathe Tradition Not Addiction/Tar Wars (BTNA/TW):

BTNA had created a 9-minute video version of our curriculum for teachers to use for their online classes and have already had the video shown to 4 different high school classes at NACA! If you are interested in this video on commerical tobacco versus traditional tobacco, please contact NHI-BTNA/TW Coordinator Nicolette Abeyta. We are also currently looking to recruit more BTNA leaders. Please contact Nicolette if you are interested: nicoletteabeyta1@gmail.com

Running Medicine:

RM completed their first ever virtual spring season "Creating Community Through Movement" (CCTM) with over 13,000+ miles logged, 2,000+ participants that spanned across the country and parts of the world. RM believed there needed to be a sense of community through these tough times. That's where the idea of incorporating the healing power of movement in virtual weekly way came about. Check out the CCTM video here - which includes a list of our co-partners.

Summer season is upcoming, details to come.

NHI Loving Service Support Program
Are you in need of support? Do you have support to offer others?

This is a program we have launched in coordination with the many agencies looking to support Indigenous families, particularly in the ABQ area where some of the support being offered on Reservations may not be offered. It is also a way to use NHI's "love currency" in a real way and a chance to connect those in need with those who can help meet that need. You can share this widely and can also offer your own time, skills, and $$ to the cause.

Second, through the NHI Loving Service Support fund we have been able to help families needing support during the pandemic, and wanted to share one of these stories here. For those still needing support:

Click here to apply

NHI Loving Service Support Program Family Recipient:
I would like to Thank you for helping me & my family during this pandemic. I was able to pay my Gas & Electricity bills. The rest of the funds were used in buying food & household necessities. All of my income comes from me being self employed, & Covid-19 has really caused a great hardship on me & my family. Part of the funds also helped me in making my daughter's 7th birthday come true. I am very grateful for NHI's Loving Service Support. Thank you! My daughter's name is Katelynn "Rain", & we celebrated her 7th birthday. She was expecting a huge party but with all this covid pandemic going on, we weren't able to have a huge party. We did the best we could.

Also pictured, next to her is her brother Kyle. And on the other end are my niece, Jasmine "rainbow" & nephew Dylan. Again thank you for supporting Native American Artists.
NHI Leadership Corner

“NHI reminds me that it is not fear and uncertainty that has to consume my thoughts. Being able to participate with kind individuals within NHI and the community reminds me that it is ok to be uncertain, but to also remember to smile.” - Daisy Belmares-Ortega

“Having just joined the board during a pandemic, NHI is helping me to focus more on my well-being while taking care of others. I’m getting better organized to allow time for a walk, meditation or just sitting for a few minutes to read a few pages of a book.” - Melvin Monette

“Being a part of NHI has taught me that well-being is much more than just a physical component. It is not only physical but also mental and spiritual. Health through loving service is sometimes what a person needs more than medicine.” - Selina Montoya

“NHI improves my well-being by providing consistent connection with others, including members of the community and fellow UNM students. Whether it is in-person or through virtual platforms, being able to share my story and listen to the stories of those involved with NHI give me inspiration and confidence that I am truly grateful for.” - Kimberly Chapman

Scholarship & Grants:

Education Is Ceremony Scholarship

Each year, the Native Health Initiative awards about 4 Indigenous scholars with the Education is Ceremony Scholarship Award. One recipient shares: “I was awarded the Education is Ceremony Scholarship to assist with my expenses as a student at Colorado College, a liberal arts institution in Colorado Springs where I am pursuing a Neuroscience degree. This scholarship has been a great help in ensuring my costs for my education are covered, from tuition to course
fees. To be a Native American student and the first in my family to attend college out-of-state is a blessing and I appreciate the care and support given by the Native Health Initiative.”
- Dominique Jasperse

**Congratulations to our NHI Graduates!!**

Nicolette Abeyta is currently the Program Leader for Breathe Tradition, Not Addiction/Tar Wars. Nicolette is from Albuquerque and graduated from UNM with a B.S. in Biochemistry. Her next steps will be to apply to medical school.

Veronica Hutchison is a Running Medicine Downtown Albuquerque Leader from Santa Fe, NM. Veronica attended the University of New Mexico (UNM) to get a dual degree in Biology with a Health, Medicine, Human Values minor and another degree in Psychology with a Chemistry minor. She will be attending
Kristen Woody (Running Medicine):
"Yá'át'ééh, my name is Kristen Woody. I am originally from Cowsprings, Arizona and I am a member of the Navajo Nation. I am Bitter Water clan and born for the Salt people clan. I attended the University of New Mexico for the past four years. I received my Bachelor’s of Science degree in Biology with two minors in Chemistry and Psychology. My next steps in life are to apply and get accepted into medical school. I hope to become a Native American physician to serve my community."

Be safe, Be well, and Be Thankful.

Native Health Initiative

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