

# NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM NEWSLETTER

Fall 2019



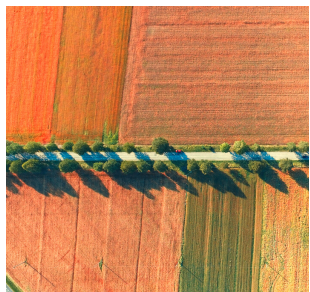




# Health Promotion in the Northeast Region

Our Health Promotion Program utilizes the public health 3.0 approach, where it is understood people cannot be healthy if they don't have a stable home, steady income, a living wage, or reliable transportation. Given the rural and frontier nature of the state, many residents lack access to well-paying jobs, safe walking trails, public transportation and even fresh fruits and vegetables. These non-medical components of wellness are what drive the work of the Health Promotion Program throughout New Mexico.

We keep our finger on the pulse of the communities we serve to better understand the barriers they face and the assets they contain. We are instrumental in providing resources, technical assistance, data, and infrastructure to local coalitions, councils, and committees addressing health.





# Preparation, Harvest, Reestablishing a Set Point

## Harvesting Health by Amy Sandoval



Many people have heard the phrase, “You reap what you sow,” meaning whatever you put your time, talent and energy into is what you get back through your achievement. Within our Health Promotion Program, this saying only holds true with time. Our program focuses on health at the population level instead of the individual level. Our team is comprised of mostly health educators, but unlike a clinical setting, our Health Promotion Specialists do not solely provide one-on-one health education about public health topics. They are focused instead on community health issues impacting groups of people where they live, work, play, and pray.

The Northeast Region Health Promotion Team plants seeds by mobilizing community partnerships to identify and solve health issues our communities face. Building relationships is essential to identifying champions, stakeholders, and resources to address the health status of the communities we serve. So, after these relationships have been built, then what? Health Promotion interventions are not created by chance; they are the product of a coordinated effort and are usually based on a systematic planning model: the community health improvement process.

One of the first questions to respond to this process is: “What is the need?” To answer, we begin collecting and analyzing data at the local level. There are more than a few significant health issues within a community and the data will show the greatest need. After assessing resources to address the most significant needs, partners can determine the envisioned outcomes by asking: “How do we get there?” Most groups hit a roadblock at this point due to lack of funding, commitment from partners, or realistic interventions to implement. This roadblock is overcome by utilizing evidence-based interventions. Evidence-based interventions use a range of integrated policies, strategies, activities, and services whose effectiveness is proven and informed by research and evaluation.

To harvest what has been sown, partners need to navigate the most important component: time. Time brings some of the greatest outcomes by delivering access to healthy foods, economic stability, educational opportunities, and many other factors impacting a person’s health status. When these outcomes have been harvested, the last step, evaluation, asks: “How did we do?” Evaluation determines whether communities move forward on a different path by starting a new cyclical process, make adaptations, or steer forward to produce greater success. It will also reveal if we have reaped what we have sown by answering the question, “Did you put your time, talent and energy into what was achieved?”





# Preparation, Harvest, Reestablishing a Set Point

## Resetting the Course of Action for the Upcoming Year

by **Christa Hernandez**

Summer is quickly winding down; kids are back at school and it is the start of another fiscal year. It seems like it was just yesterday when health councils were planning out the year, deciding on activities to complete and then before I knew it, it was the the end of the fiscal year and deliverables were being completed and submitted.

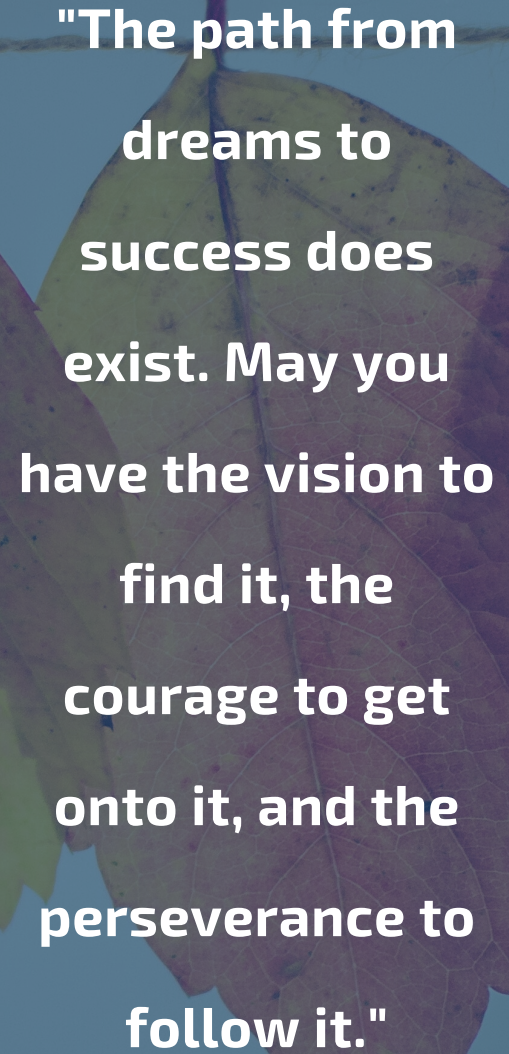
Yet here we are, fall of 2019 and it is time to start the cycle once more. This is my 7th year supporting health councils to identify and complete health initiatives and my 3rd year supporting all health councils in the Northeast Region.

Although there is a sense of familiarity with the process, there is always a feeling of excitement when the fiscal year is about to begin. For me, it is about being a part of a process of growth, determination, and commitment as each health council takes a vision and makes it a reality for their community. Each vision is unique, the manner in which it is carried out is diverse, and the end outcome varies with each community and each year. Some years there is massive yield for minimum effort, while other years there is hardly any movement although a tremendous amount of effort was put forth. The latter of these makes a year challenging because a health council might feel as if their efforts are for nothing, when it is simply a part of the cycle.

Over the years I have seen health councils grow leaps and bounds, never giving up despite the obstacles with which they are presented. I have also seen health councils adapt and modify their activities when an activity is not having the outcome they are seeking.

Each year brings about a different set of circumstances and it is necessary to evaluate what worked, what didn't, and reset the course of direction for the upcoming year.

To all the Health Council Coordinators and Health Council members in the Northeast Region I say to you: **Keep up the fight. Your work is never in vain. Thank you for putting the needs and health of your communities first.**



"The path from  
dreams to  
success does  
exist. May you  
have the vision to  
find it, the  
courage to get  
onto it, and the  
perseverance to  
follow it."

**Kalpana  
Chawla**

(1962-2003)  
*American astronaut, engineer,  
and the first woman of Indian  
descent to go to space*





# Preparation, Harvest, Reestablishing a Set Point

## Raton Senior Citizens & the Senior Farmers Market Program by Nichole Romero

Nichole Romero, Health Promotion Specialist who serves Colfax, Union, and Harding counties, worked with Martin Miller from the NMDOH Farmers Market Nutrition Program, The Legend Brand Farm from Pueblo, Colorado, and other small vendors from Raton, to ensure all qualifying seniors and WIC Clients in Colfax County have options for purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables this summer.

To qualify, seniors must fall within 185% of the Federal poverty guidelines. All qualifying seniors get a book of five checks totaling \$25 to purchase fresh fruit, vegetables, fresh herbs, and honey. Seniors can use their checks at any farmers market vendor in New Mexico signed up with the program. If there is a surplus of checks, folks can receive a second book to use. Seniors who received the checks this year were appreciative because there were no checks distributed last year due to the scarcity of fresh produce available in the area.

Nichole will continue to give out more checks to seniors when they become available. She works with different programs such as the Raton Senior Center and Senior Companions to distribute the checks to community members. Seniors know about these checks due to word of mouth and other programs.



## Managing Fall Allergies by Valentina White

As fall approaches, individuals who suffer from allergies may not be thrilled with the changes the season brings: sneezing, stuffy or runny nose, and itchy eyes, nose and throat. Asthma symptoms can also worsen for people with asthma and allergies.

The primary cause of fall allergies is pollen. Ragweed pollen is the leading cause of allergies in the autumn months usually between August and November. The ragweed plant can be annual or perennial herbs and shrubs, with as many as 17 different species in the U.S. A single plant can produce about a billion grains of pollen per season. These pollen grains are lightweight and easily transported through the air. Ragweed grows just about everywhere, in fields, along the side of highways, and in vacant lots.

Although it is difficult to avoid total exposure to ragweed pollen, the best way to prevent seasonal allergies is to stop them before they begin by reviewing and beginning your treatment plan and medications as instructed by your health care team. Check out these tips to help manage fall allergies:

- **Have your doctor perform tests to determine your allergies and prescribe the right medication.**
- **Take your medication as prescribed to manage your symptoms. Start your medication before symptoms begin or a few weeks before the change of the season.**
- **Check pollen levels in your area. On days with a high pollen count, limit your outdoor activities in the morning or on windy days when pollen levels are highest.**
- **Changing your clothes after you've been outdoors may reduce hay fever symptoms by limiting exposure to pollen clinging to clothing.**
- **Shower before bedtime to wash off clinging pollen.**
- **Machine wash and dry clothing and bedding often.**
- **Keep windows and doors closed at home. Keep car windows closed while traveling.**





# Preparation, Harvest, Reestablishing a Set Point

## Fall Prevention Deserves Your Attention

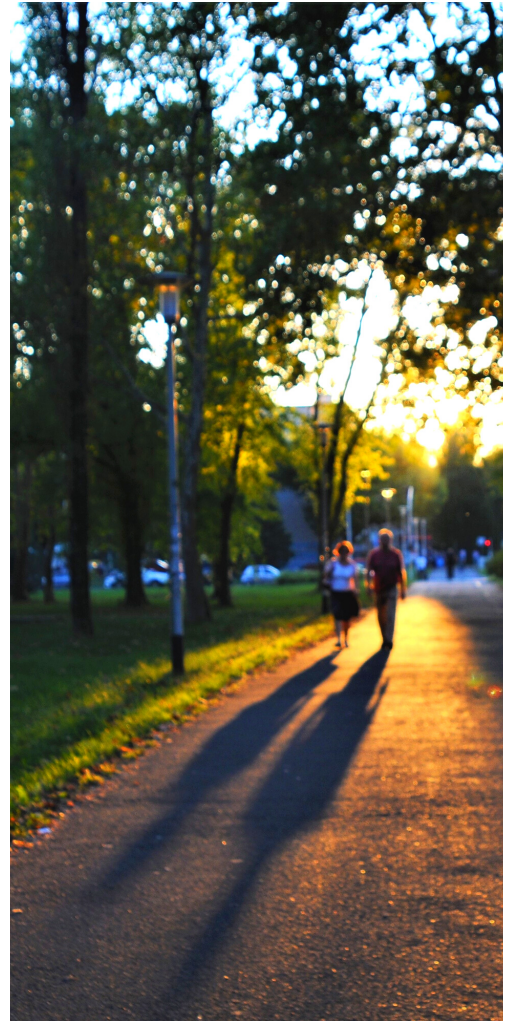
by Ashley Ringwood

Most of us have witnessed or experienced a horrid fall, no matter our age. Whether it is a household item or almost-invisible ice on the pavement causing you to slip and fall, the likelihood of winding up on your back rather than your feet with a fall increases as we age. Fall prevention can be a difficult topic to discuss, and if you have fallen, you can relate to the self-doubt one experiences when a fall occurs.

Falls are the leading cause of accidental injury death among adults 65 years of age and older in the United States and in New Mexico. Falls impact the health of older adults and can reduce our ability to be independent. A traumatic fall is life changing. Older adults who no longer feel independent see a negative impact in their health. It's important to ensure they have the tools and skills needed to prolong their independence.

The Los Alamos County Falls Prevention Coalition provides tools for community members to reduce the risk of falls. They have facilitated classes in the last few months, such as **A Matter of Balance**, **STEADI** (Stop Elderly Accidents, Deaths and Injury) and a fall prevention training. They also offer free home safety inspections to assess fall-risks and provide check lists for people to evaluate on their homes.

Our Health Promotion Program works with Paths to Health New Mexico coordinators to offer a variety of programs to provide healthy living tools for adults, including fall prevention. We continue to partner with Tiara Shorty, Primary Adult Falls Prevention Coordinator with our NMDOH Falls Prevention Program, who provides resources for the communities we serve.



**Stay independent with these proven ways to reduce your risk of falling, no matter your age!**

### **Make your Home Safer**

Remove clutter and tripping hazards

### **Keep Moving**

Start or continue to exercise to improve your strength and balance

### **Speak Up**

Be open with your healthcare provider

### **Get an Annual Eye Exam**

Continue to schedule appointments and update prescriptions





# Preparation, Harvest, Reestablishing a Set Point

## Health Promotion is the Set Point

by Desiree Valdez

**Set Point:(tennis), a tennis term meaning one player is one point away from winning a set**

**Set Point: (control system), the target value that an automatic control system will aim to reach**

Health promotion has many definitions, yet more misinterpretations. The way health promotion is implemented globally runs the gamut from health education about oral health to creating more health literate materials about issues affecting community health. In New Mexico, our Health Promotion Program works with communities on multiple health initiatives by building relationships, being engaged, and facilitating action. Each of these pieces are valuable “set points” all NMDOH programs can learn from.

### RELATIONSHIPS

#### Listening vs. Hearing

Listen and acknowledge the needs and goals of community members as opposed to assuming you know what will work when you hear familiar issues being raised.

#### Consistency

Show up when invited, return emails and phone calls, and check in on a regular basis. Kindness, in addition to respecting other people's time, are essential skills here.

#### Being present

Be open to the flow of events and meetings by remaining in the moment despite potential awkwardness, discomfort, or misunderstandings that bubble up during interactions with communities.

### ENGAGEMENT

#### Understanding Context

Consider the population, location, history, and the reputation of your program when working with a community.

#### Research

Find out as much as you can about the community you are working with, the health indicators they are concerned about, and what they have already used to address those health indicators.

#### Ask Questions

If you have questions about the community, the health initiatives, or people being served, respectfully ask questions to learn more.

### ACTION

#### Follow Through

When you discuss ways to collaborate, make sure to follow up and remain in communication to build trust and maintain momentum on the work.

#### Evidence-based strategies

Look into interventions with **relevant** connections to the communities being served to ensure success.

#### Evaluation

Assess the tools you are using, the strategies being implemented, and the outcomes to determine the next steps to best serve community members.







# NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM

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