



# **NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM NEWSLETTER**

Fall 2021



# FALL 2021

## Making A Difference

### **The Only Constant**

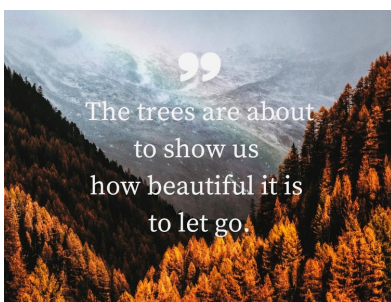
**by Amy Sandoval**

This season's Health Promotion Team Newsletter is reflecting on changes and making a difference. These two themes are fitting with the Fall season, but as many people focus on harvesting and gathering, it is one of the best times for self-reflection, awareness and mindfulness. A Greek philosopher once said, "The only constant is change", and this reminds us that our surroundings, bodies, and minds are always growing and developing to align with what we are evolved to do, change.

Coinciding with change is looking at impacts and outcomes. Whether they are personal or professional, it is important to reflect on what has evolved and in turn, made a difference. Most recently I drove up to Hyde Park in Santa Fe to get away and retreat from today's fast paced world working in public health. Glancing into a cascade of beautiful golden yellow, burgundy, and bronze landscapes, I was reminded of the many opportunities my team and I have engaged in within the past 20 months, supporting with the prevention of COVID-19 amidst our daily program responsibilities. I am so proud of my team and the many roles they have assumed to support their local public health offices, communities, and the region as a whole.

Like many other public health staff, they have spent countless hours supporting with contact investigations, contact tracing, COVID-19 testing and immunizations, transporting samples and supplies, and those responsibilities are only related to COVID-19. At the same time they have been leading 6-week Paths2Health sessions in rural areas, preventing chronic illnesses; working with Senior Center Directors addressing senior hunger; providing trainings for partners to support with community health improvement initiatives; addressing technology challenges amongst seniors; supporting with local suicide prevention strategies; providing brain-injury prevention trainings for youth; and the list goes on.

Sometimes working in the trenches is a good reminder to retreat to a higher elevation to take-in the view and reflect on those outcomes and impacts. If we are evolved to change, like leaves on a tree, we must always be open to a new season in preparation of what is to come. To my team, I want to let you know how proud I am of each of you and the differences you are constantly making.



### **Establishing the Foundation for Lasting Change**

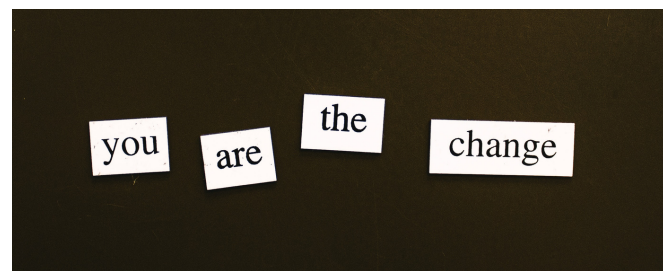
**by Christa Hernandez**

Each year I am always amazed to see the growth and changes which occur within health councils. From one year to the next, it is possible for a health council to identify an emerging health priority to focus on, to change health council coordinators, or to be faced with local politics that may pose challenges or support their efforts. For the past two years, I have had the opportunity to see change and the growth that has come from changes taking place in two of the health councils I work with. The Los Alamos County Health Council and the Taos Health Council have both undergone transformative changes and are in the process of re-establishing themselves.

The Los Alamos County Health Council became affiliated with the county and has worked to establish a strong board to oversee the health council's activities. The transition from a community to a county health council created the opportunity for the health council to become a formal advisory board directly affiliated with County Council. The health council recently completed a gap analysis and is now working to create a comprehensive health plan which will also address issues around equity within Los Alamos.

During this same time, the Taos Health Council also went through a process where health council members applied and were selected to serve as representatives for different districts within the Board of the health council. Additionally, voting members of the health council were also identified per the newly adopted bylaws of the health council. The health council is currently in the process of identifying the formalized process for the health council board and will also be completing a gap analysis to identify their health council priorities.

Both of these health councils have done an amazing job of taking the time to lay the foundation for their future activities by re-inventing themselves, their core team, the functions of their health councils, and the way they do business. These are excellent examples of the positivity change can bring as well as the difference small changes can make to improve the effectiveness and strength of a health council.





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## Making A Difference

### Meet Our New Health Promotion Coordinator



The Northeast Region Health Promotion Team welcomes their new Coordinator based out of the Santa Fe Regional Health Office, Steve Martinez.

Steve was born and raised in beautiful Northern New Mexico and is proud to call the town of Alcalde home. He is a graduate of Capital High School in Santa Fe and earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees from New Mexico Highlands University while also competing on the wrestling team. Steve enjoys all types of physical activities, hanging out with his dog, Tater, doing things with his family, and anything that involves being outdoors, especially fishing. Steve recently relocated back to New Mexico from Denver, Colorado where he worked in health promotion and youth focused prevention for the Tri-County Health Department. Over the last decade Steve has been actively involved in enhancing public health initiatives in community settings. His past work experiences have allowed him to develop a solid understanding of essential community engagement practices, health planning skills and meaningful relationship building tools.

As a new Health Promotion Coordinator, Steve will provide support to the Health Promotion Specialists and community partners to further the mission of public health in the Northeast Region. This includes promoting evidence-based prevention programs, supporting health planning efforts, and building trust among external partners. Steve is highly passionate about population health and is eager to continue this great work in his home state. He values a strong-work ethic and is highly motivated to move the dial on some of the Northeast Region's biggest health priorities.

### Community Beautification with Purpose

by Valentina White

In the Spring of 2021, the Mora Health Council, along with several key community partners and programs, planned, coordinated, and co-sponsored a Clean Up Day in Mora County. The goal and purpose of this activity was to raise community awareness about alcohol use and DWI issues in Mora County. This activity was open to all community members and those who participated in this activity were each assigned to a section of county road to be cleaned. All discarded litter was collected and alcohol related trash was separated from non-alcohol related trash. At the end of the cleanup activity, the number of collected bags was compared. At the end of the activity all participants were given a short survey with alcohol related questions. Lunch and a goodie bag with incentives was provided to all participants.

Special thanks go to all the community members who participated, Mora County Sheriff, Mora Creative Council, Mora Valley Community Health Services, Inc., Mora DWI Program, and all Mora Health Council Members for making the May 2021 Clean Up Day a success. By showing how much alcohol related trash is being discarded on County Roads in Mora, they are helping to keep Mora County beautiful and litter free. The next steps for the health council is to report the survey findings to key community partners and plan for further Clean Up Day events.



May 1, 2021, Mora Clean Up Day. The left side is regular trash and the right-side is alcohol related trash.



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### **Growing Great Kids Halloween Event**

**by Nichole Romero**

After receiving an early childhood training in 2016 from The University of New Mexico, Growing Great Kids (GGK) was established by concerned local community members and organizations who wanted to address the high rates of low birth weight babies and child abuse in Colfax County. The group worked with UNM staff to create an ideal vision and work plan for Colfax County residents to address the needs of Colfax County children, parents, and grandparents. The group started promoting parenting tips on how to read, play, talk, and sing to your child and to encourage positive interactions between parents, grandparents, and children. The group has held various trainings and provided snacks and information to all who attend. These trainings included various effective parenting skills for parents and how to relay the information to their children.

Growing Great Kids then partnered with Three Rivers Education Foundation, which reaches many schools and communities in New Mexico and Colorado. This foundation donates free books and has various tutoring programs for students and training for parents and educators. The foundation also provides grant opportunities to educators who want to further their knowledge and education.

During the summer, Growing Great Kids provides children's books when free lunches are offered to children at various parks in Raton. During these lunchtime events, GGK members read to the children and encourage them to read at home. This has been a great success with children wanting to read and parents learning how to engage their children when reading.

On October 29, 2021, members of Growing Great Kids handed out approximately 500 books, candy, and parents magazines to community members in Raton who were trick-or-treating. This is the second time GGK's has held this Halloween event. The event was not held last year due to the pandemic, but this year many children were excited to receive free books and parents were grateful for the information and magazine they received.



**Top photo: Park Ranger Pat Walsh reading to kids.**

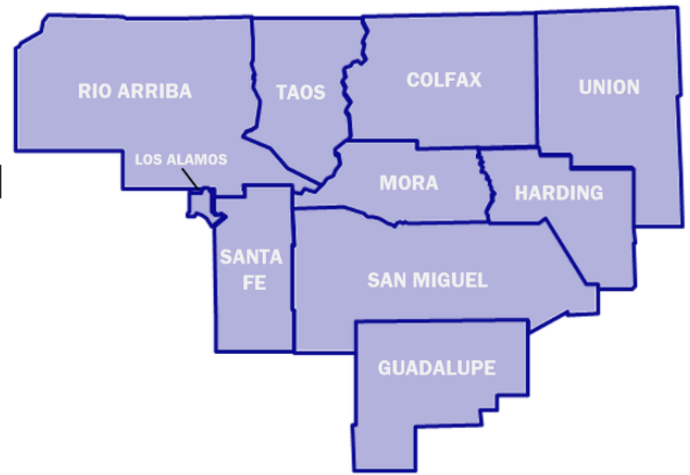
**Bottom photo: Child playing at GGK event.**

(both photos were taken prior to the start of the pandemic)

# PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

## NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM

We serve our diverse communities by harnessing their power to create positive and lasting solutions to the public health issues they face, as well as locate resources and assist with health initiative development. We envision creating systems with engaged communities striving for a happy and healthy lifespan for all in New Mexico.



### HOW WE SERVE COMMUNITIES

- Facilitate connection between community partners and NMDOH programs and resources
- Conduct community-based health promotion with community and tribal health councils, coalitions, and other partners
- Access resources and funding
- Link community partners to data, evidence-based interventions, and NMDOH programs.
- Provide technical assistance with community health assessment, health profiles, communications, and strategic planning
- Maintain open communication between community partners and NMDOH
- Engage in advocacy and policy development around local and state-wide health issues

### WE CONNECT THE DOTS



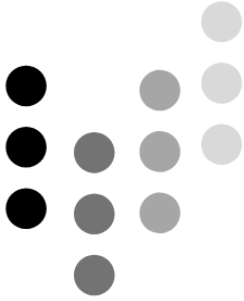
“Health Promotion Teams strengthen collaborative efforts at the local level...to provide health councils and community partners with data, technical assistance and other resources at the request of local communities.”

- 2014 New Mexico State Health Improvement Plan



## REGIONAL STAFF

# NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM TEAM



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### WHAT THE PROGRAM MANAGER DOES:

Leads the team to facilitate the Public Health Division mission and initiatives, coordinates and implements strategies to address health priorities and indicators, and supports community preventive and population-based services

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**Vacant**

Community Health  
Epidemiologist

Contact  
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### WHAT THE EPIDEMIOLOGIST DOES:

Provides leadership for assessment, evaluation, and public health planning, develops and builds capacity within the team to increase assessment skills in data interpretation, analysis, program evaluation, and other related skills

### WHAT THE COORDINATORS DO:

Assure coordination of community health improvement activities with DOH by assessing community readiness, assist with provision and interpretation of data, identify local partners and include them in the planning and implementation of regional and state initiatives

### WHAT THE SPECIALISTS DO:

Work within and support their local Public Health Offices, engage with their local communities to address health priorities through the development of policy, supporting health councils, and implementing special projects and grants

## HEALTH PROMOTION SPECIALISTS

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