



Bakersfield American
B·A·I·H·P
Indian Health Project

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

661-327-4030

www.BakersfieldAIHP.org

501 40th Street
Bakersfield, CA 93301

January

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

I hope everyone is staying warm during this winter season, and that you are enjoying the new year with us as we bring forward new services and programs to meet your needs. As we ended the year 2023, BAIHP celebrated so many accomplishments and an achievement we are all excited about is the construction project funded by the Department of Health Care Services Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Project, which will invest \$11 Million to build a 2nd story expansion above our existing site. We will be updating our community as the construction phases start and complete via social media throughout the year.

"The horizon of life is broadened chiefly by the enlargement of the heart."

-Unknown

Angel Galvez spoke at the Honor Flight Kern County Flight 48 dinner ceremony. He acknowledged how, Nationally, there have only been three Honor Flights for Native Americans and this was the first for Kern County. Native Americans have the highest rate of military service per capita compared to other ethnic groups, so being able to honor Native American Veterans specifically is very important. To be able to offer our songs, dances, and prayers at these monuments is something that will stick with these honored heroes for years to come.

M. ANGEL GALVEZ, BS, MAOL
BAIHP CEO



OUR FEATHERS SOARING HIGHER



Honor Flight #48



With help from Honor Flight Kern County, BAIHP was able to work towards sending Native American veterans to the nation's capital to visit various memorial sites on the first All-Native Honor Flight.

Thirty-five Native Veterans attended along with a long list of supporters who assisted the Veterans during the entire three-day long trip. The Veterans came from various tribes, but all shared a common history - protecting our country. One major site the group visited was the National Native American Veterans Memorial. From The National Museum of the American Indian, "*The design incorporates water for ceremonies, benches for gathering and reflection, and four lances where veterans, family members, tribal leaders, and others can tie cloths for prayers and healing.*" Around the memorial site, song and dance filled the space, including dance from our very own Cultural Coordinator, Jackson Copeland.



During the trip, each Veteran received a personalized thank you letter to honor them for their service to the country. It was highly emotional and left many of the Veterans in tears as they read those words that were meant for them. The gratitude didn't end there, however, as once the group returned home they were greeted by a huge crowd of family, community members, songs, prayers, dance, and love. We would like to thank each and every Veteran who attended to make this such an impactful event and we would also like to thank Honor Flight Kern County for helping us honor our Native Veterans who worked so hard to ensure that we can live the lives we have today.



Gathering of Native Americans



On October 14th, BAIHP hosted its annual two-day Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) for 489 attendees for both days.

GONA is a community based cultural event where American Indian & Alaska Natives (AIAN) gather to address community-identified issues, promote wellness, reduce stigma, create community connectedness, and reflect on AIAN cultural values, traditions, and spiritual practices. GONA uses an interactive approach that empowers and supports Kern County's diverse AIAN community. The four areas of GONA are:

BELONGING

A place for all ages. A place for all kinds of people. Represents infancy and childhood, a time when we need to know how we belong.

INTERDEPENDENCE

Action and community leadership. Symbolized by adults, integral and interdependent within their families and communities.



MASTERY

Empowerment, for individuals, and for the community. Honors adolescence as a time of vision and mastery.

GENEROSITY

Teacher/Elder and resources in the community. Honors our elders, who give their knowledge and teachings to our future generations.



Native American Heritage Month



On November 4th, BAIHP hosted our Native American Heritage Month Luncheon. It was an important event which allowed Kern County Natives to celebrate their culture while learning about important topics that impact our community from our Community Panelists who all have used our services in the past, and our Speaker, Captain Emily Williams, LCSW from SAMHSA who shared the great work they've been doing to make mental health resources more accessible for AIAN peoples such as the 988 Crisis Hotline that anyone can call or text if they are in need, or even if they just want someone to talk to.



Congratulations

Dr. Jackie Kaslow, DrPH, MPH (Miwok, Nissenan-Maidu, & Pit River), Program Director for Native Star Foundation's Red Medicine Tobacco Prevention Program. She received our Warrior Award for the work with our Native community.



The event started with an opening prayer song and dance from the Eagle Heart Drummers as well as a Land Acknowledgement from our Board Chairwoman Jackie Lopez (Tejon Indian Tribe). We had several community partners and vendors attend to share resources and Native-made goods throughout the event. Additionally, we offered flu shots and smudging to attendees. During the event, we took time to honor our Veterans with a song from the Eagle Heart Drummers, as well as a Woman's song for Dr. Kaslow. The community joined during the Snake Dance where they held hands to dance throughout the room. Danza Azteca performed after lunch with their high energy drum and dance.



Veterans Day Parade



On November 11th, Bakersfield hosted their Veterans Day Parade. BAIHP was in attendance to honor our Native Veterans. The theme of the event was "*Veterans Prepared to Serve.*" The Eagle Heart Drummers, many of whom are also Veterans, sat in the trailer to offer their songs and prayers during the parade.



Treading Together with Tai-Chi

Thanks to our TIPCAP partnership, we have taken great strides to improve the risk of falling for our elder population by implementing one hour Tai-Chi classes twice a week. Tai-Chi involves slow-motion flow that can deliver several health benefits including better balance, mobility, and coordination. Tai-Chi can also improve mental focus and physical effort to increase strength and flexibility to help reduce the likelihood of falling. Fear of falling and balance impairment are prevalent in older adults and Tai-Chi can be a beneficial exercise to reduce stress and build more confidence to help overcome activity restrictions, thus resulting in a more active and involved lifestyle.

Tai-Chi has been a wonderful exercise choice for our elders because of the slow and steady movements that are low-impact and easily learned. Movements can also be adapted, and some moves can be made while seated. If someone has a sore ligament, bad knee, or ankle, the participant decides how much to stretch throughout the movement. Participants start gradually and exert themselves to the level where the exercise feels comfortable, safe, and sustainable.



Tobacco Free Kern (TFK) & BAIHP

BAIHP is an executive member of TFK and on July 12, 2023, Bakersfield City Council unanimously voted to approve implementing Kern County's Tobacco Retailer's License (TRL). This ordinance includes issuance of the permit, enforcement, compliance, and the collection and use of fees. Revenue from permit sales will fund county enforcement efforts of already existing state and county tobacco regulations. Data from Kern County Public Health reveals around 47% of tobacco retailers located near schools have sold to minors. According to the CDC, cigarette smoking is more common among American Indian & Alaska Natives (AIAN) than almost any other racial group.



- AIAN have a higher risk of tobacco-related disease and death due to higher rates of cigarette smoking and other commercial tobacco use.
- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among AIAN.
- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among AIAN.
- Diabetes is the fourth leading cause of death among AIAN. The risk of developing diabetes is 30%–40% higher for smokers than nonsmokers.

BAIHP, in partnership with TFK, will continue to educate the community about smoking risks and work to reduce commercial tobacco use.



Bi-Annual Star Award Recipient Mike Acosta

Mike had been with the organization several years, always showed willingness to assist when asked for help, and was a big team player. Although he was in high demand, he never turned anyone away. Mike is personable and professional. He is a perfect example of living the mission and vision goals. Mike deserves to be recognized with the Star Award for being an exemplary employee of BAIHP.

Mike recently departed from BAIHP to seek a new path for him and his family. We are very grateful for the time we got to know him, the help he provided for us, and wish him well. Also nominated for the Star Award were Kat Rodgers and Rosalyn Hammond, who we are thankful to have at BAIHP.



Tübatulabal Landback Ceremony

On September 16th, some BAIHP staff attended the Tübatulabal Landback Ceremony at Kwolokam Village. We were honored to be a part of such a historic moment for the Tübatulabal tribe and their people. The sunny day was filled with drum and songs and dances that got the community up and moving. It is likely that this was the first time Native songs and dances graced those lands in the last 200 years.



In an interview with SJV Water, Tübatulabal Tribal Chairman, Robert Gomez, said, *"It's inspirational for us ... This heals old soul wounds for us since the incursion of the 1800s. It makes us feel like a community, having land back means something to us."* We hope that this will only be the next in a long line of Land Backs for tribes all throughout all lands.

Health and Resource Fair

On January 20th, the BAIHP Medical and Transportation team joined the Dolores Huerta Foundation, Building Healthy Communities Kern, and CAPK for their Health and Resource Fair in McFarland where we offered community resources as well as a COVID-19 booster shot. In total we served 50 participants!





Tax Season 2024



It's that time of year again. Time to gather all your documents and receipts and go through the tedium of filing your taxes for the past year, 2023. However, with new IRS updates and investments in support systems, this task shouldn't feel as intimidating or cumbersome. There is a plethora of resources available to help you make it through this taxing task! First let's look at some key dates:

-  **January 12:** IRS Free File opens.
-  **January 29:** Filing season start date for individual tax returns.
-  **April 15:** Due date of filing a tax return or to request an extension for most of the nation.
-  **October 15:** Due date for extension filers.

Although the IRS will not officially begin accepting and processing tax returns until Jan. 29, you don't need to wait until then to work on your taxes. Most software companies accept electronic submissions and then hold them until the IRS is ready to begin processing later this month. IRS Free File will also be available on IRS.gov starting Jan. 12 in advance of the filing season opening. Some new and expanded tools and other resources include:

-  Expanded in-person service at Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TACs). The IRS will also offer extended hours at many TACs nationwide.
-  Increased help available on the toll-free line (1-800-829-1040 for individuals) and an expanded customer call back feature designed to significantly reduce wait times.
-  Improvements to the *Where's My Refund?* tool will allow taxpayers to see more detailed refund status messages in plain language. These updates will also ensure *Where's My Refund* works seamlessly on mobile devices. The new updates will reduce the need for taxpayers to call the IRS for answers to basic questions.
-  Enhanced paperless processing that will enable taxpayers to submit all correspondence, non-tax forms, and responses to notices digitally and will be able to e-File 20 additional tax forms.
-  An enhanced IRS Individual Online Account that includes chat, the option to schedule and cancel future payments, revise payment plans and validate and save bank accounts.
-  A new, pilot tax filing service called Direct File that gives eligible taxpayers a new choice to file their 2023 federal tax returns online, for free, directly with the IRS. It will be rolled out in phases and is expected to be widely available in mid-March.
-  The Interactive Tax Assistant (ITA) is a tool that provides answers to questions specific to individual circumstances. Based on input, it can determine if a person should file a tax return, their filing status, if someone can be claimed as a dependent, if a type of income is taxable, if a filer is eligible to claim a credit or if an expense can be deducted.
-  People can use the IRS Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications to find a preparer who is skilled in tax preparation and accurately files income tax returns. Most tax return preparers provide outstanding and professional tax service, but be sure to check tips for choosing a tax preparer and how to avoid unethical "ghost" return preparers.
-  Through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs, volunteers are available nationwide to provide free tax assistance to low-to-moderate income (generally under \$64,000 in adjusted gross income) and elderly taxpayers (age 60 and older).
-  A Department of Defense program, MilTax generally offers free return preparation and electronic filing software for federal income tax returns and up to three state income tax returns for all military members, and some veterans, with no income limit.

Filing an accurate return can help taxpayers avoid refund delays or later IRS mailings about a problem. People should report all their taxable income and wait to file until they receive all income related documents. This is especially important for people who may receive various Forms 1099 from banks or other payers reporting unemployment compensation, dividends, pensions, annuities or retirement plan distributions.

People should plan to file electronically with direct deposit. This is still the fastest and easiest way to file and receive a refund. To avoid delays in processing, people should avoid filing paper returns whenever possible. Although the IRS issues most refunds in less than 21 days, the IRS cautions taxpayers not to rely on receiving a refund by a certain date, especially when making major purchases or paying bills. Some returns may require additional review and may take longer.

For further information about any of the tools in this article, please visit www.irs.gov. And may the IRS be kind to your patience and your wallets this year!

BAIHP NEW BOARD MEMBER



Michelle Jara-Rangel (*Yaqui-Mexican*)
Member, BAIHP Board of Directors

Michelle Jara-Rangel has worked in the social service industry for over 30 years. Her journey started when she was 16 years old, volunteering in a drug and rehab counseling center. She has an Associates in Human Services and a Bachelor's in Organizational Leadership. She has worked with the Head Start program in various capacities for over 20 years. The past 10 years she has been blessed to have worked for a Tribal organization serving seven California counties. She is currently a Federal Reviewer for the Head Start/Early Head Start programs and sits on the Board of Directors for CAP of Kern. She joined the CalFresh Healthy Living Tribal Ambassadors project two years ago, to learn how to better address food sovereignty in not only the Native communities, but in the various communities she works with. She has a passion for serving and making a difference in the lives of those she is privileged to work with. Every job she has held, every experience she has had, and every person she has had contact with has helped prepare her to make a difference! She feels blessed for the opportunity to serve as the newest Board member for BAIHP.



WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Wellbriety | Monday 1:30PM - 3PM

12 Step Program With Guidance from The Red Road to Wellbriety from White Bison
"To Be Sober and Well"
Meets Court Mandated Requirements

Bingocize | Tuesday and Thursday 10AM - 11AM

Play Bingo & Get Healthy! Fall Prevention, Community, and Culture

Youth Group | Every Other Tuesday 5PM - 6:30PM

Ages 12 - 18
Cultural Talking Circles, Activities, Mental Health, Prevention and Building Community

Tai-Chi | Tuesday and Thursday 11AM - 12PM

Balance and Fall Prevention

Regalia Making | Tuesday 5PM - 7:30PM

Ages 12+ (12-15 require chaperone)
Sewing & Leather Work | Limited Spots (10) -
RSVP to save your seat

Nutrition Classes | Wednesday 10AM - 11AM (Education) | 1PM - 2PM (Cooking)

Nutrition Education, Learn & Practice Healthy Cooking & Diabetes Education Available Upon Request

Veteran's Talking Circle | First Wednesday of the Month 9AM - 11AM

Community & Culture Focus | Safe Space to Share

Women's Talking Circle | Wednesday 1:30PM - 3:30PM

Community & Culture Focus | Safe Space to Share

Beading Group | Wednesday 5PM - 7:30PM

Various Beading Activities. Learn Traditional Beading Styles

Drum Group | Thursday 6PM - 7:30PM

All Ages | Native Drumming Class, Pow-Wow Style Dancing and Etiquette



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KERN
COUNTY
HUMAN SERVICES

4TH ANNUAL SPRING GATHERING

Join us on Saturday,
March 23rd, 2024 | 11AM - 5:30PM
501 40th St, Bakersfield, CA 93301

Spring represents **rebirth, growth,** and marks a time of **renewal.** Everything is connected and works together to move through the four seasons of **Mother Earth.** Understanding this helps us focus on what is important for this season of our lives. We may focus on the **good in our lives,** on **self-improvement,** and cleanse the past to move forward with **positivity.**



Event Includes

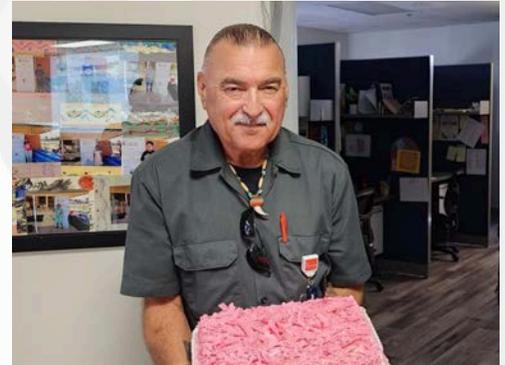
- Cultural Activities
- Cultural Artifact Display
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Suicide Prevention
- Learning and Healing Circles
- Youth Engagement & Activities
- Domestic Violence and Prevention
- Wellness Services

For more information or vendor participation
Call: (661) 327-4030 | Email: BAIHPCommunity@BakersfieldAIHP.org

BAIHP Staff Birthdays



August
Brenda (17th), Journee (21st),
Estela (10th), Evelyn (26th)



September
Jackson (23rd)



October
Rosalyn (6th), Pam (18th)



November
Angel (19th)



December
Rudy (21st), Regina (29th)



Not Pictured
Joyce - August 5th
Ravneet - October 4th
Johnny - October 15th
Lawrence - October 24th
Josh - January 20th

OUR MISSION

To serve the American Indian and Alaska Natives residing in Kern County by providing services that contribute to the health and vitality of the community in a respectful manner with high regard for cultural values, Tribal affiliation, and spiritual and personal values of individuals.

OUR VISION

BAIHP envisions a vibrant, healthful life for future generations of American Indians & Alaska Natives in Kern County by delivering sustainable, culturally integrated services, and fostering continuous community connections and whole wellness.

Donate to BAIHP



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