ACCRC to Launch Shiwi Language Pre-K Immersion Micro-school

It’s an exciting time to bear witness to the launch of the upcoming, first-ever fully immersive Shiwi Language preschool in our community.

The idea for this special project came along close to eight years ago from the Director of A:shiwi Tribal College, Hayes Lewis, and the Director of Academics, Reynelle Lowsayatee, who initially had planned to create a state-funded Pre-K charter school. That gave way to intentionally developing a more truly local school for Shiwi children, by Shiwi educators and community members.

Other like-minded individuals attended meetings from the first day, and are now directly involved with the evolution of this school. Funding was secured from the Pueblo of Zuni and from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for general planning, program development and facility construction. The Tribal College staff and the Zuni Language Board have been working on curriculum, programming, training and facility design.

Shiwi Immersion school continues next page

ZHS Students Win Governor’s STEM Challenge for Innovative Virtual Reality Mental Health Tool

A group of four talented local high school seniors – Erik Gchachu, Jermaine Johnson, Jordan Owaleon and Gabriella James – were awarded top honors in the 2024 New Mexico Governor’s STEM Challenge for their innovative prototype using virtual reality (VR) technology to address teenage social anxiety.

The project addresses the rising rates of social anxiety disorder (SAD) exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, to improve access to support amidst counselor shortages in rural areas. Their VR exposure therapy tool leads users through simulations to gradually confront anxiety triggers, showing promise for enhancing outcomes.

After presenting their prototype, the team clinched the $5,000 grand prize courtesy of the Encantado Foundation. Their accomplishment also attracted praise from leading tech firms like Meta, Intel and Deloitte. “We’re thrilled our concept resonated so strongly,” said team leader Erik Gchachu. “This encourages us to refine the software to boost realism and better support students’ mental health needs.”

The victorious foursome credited mentors Dr. Sindhu Kaimal and Dr. Bindu Kaimal for expert guidance. “Their advice proved invaluable for demonstrating VR’s advantages over traditional counseling alone,” noted Gabriella James. “We hope this spurs further research on VR-enhanced therapy.”

With bold vision and skilled execution, these students have brought innovative anxiety relief closer to reality. Their win demonstrates the wealth of young talent tackling pressing issues right here in our community.

Teens United Takes Anti-Vaping Message to Six Directions Indigenous School

By Gabriella Peynetsa, Member of Teens United Against Vaping

The Teens United Against Vaping HOSA-Future Health Professionals anti-vaping campaign group from Zuni High School visited the Six Directions Indigenous School in Gallup, New Mexico on Thursday, January 18.

The visiting group, comprising students Brooklyn Sanchez, Andruw Leekela, LaNiya Kallestewa, Kaliya Kallestewa, Jaynie Lalio, and myself, Gabriella Peynetsa, arrived to a warm welcome by the teachers and students at SDIS.

Our message to the entire student body was clear: stop vaping, as it is simply not worth the risks. And even if you can’t quit right away, take steps towards it, because quitting is a process, and any progress today brings you closer to success.

We outlined the hazardous chemicals such as THC and glycol diethylene in vaping pens and their impacts on the human body. Vaping provides only temporary relief, but has lasting physical and mental health consequences that should not be dismissed.

There have even been injuries reported from exploding vaping pens. Statistics show 52 vaping-related injuries statewide and around 3,000 vaping-related hospitalizations.

If you’re looking to quit, places like county health services or Gallup Indian Medical Center can help.

And remember, never feel pressured by your peers. When you are ready, quit and seek assistance. We hope that time is now!

POST OFFICE BOXHOLDER ZUNI, NEW MEXICO 87327

New Mexico now has the highest rate in the nation for COVID hospitalization

Get boosted!
A:shiwi Tribal College Thanks the Zuni Community

On behalf of the A:shiwi Tribal College Board of Trustees, the staff and students, we want to express our collective appreciation for all who have decided to begin or re-start their higher educational career at A:shiwi Tribal College.

We are fortunate to have an exceptional Board of Trustees and staff who clearly understand the needs of the community and who are supportive of empowering our people with care, respect and encouragement. We are grateful for the commitment, leadership and support of the Zuni Tribal Council, administration and staff.

Our enrollment is on the rise, and we have experienced more Zuni graduates at the AA and BA levels. We appreciate all who have accepted the personal commitment to register and enroll in classes here. As our enrollment increases, so will the levels and types of offerings provided. We continue to develop essential documents for organizational development, accreditation and partnership, so that more resources may be brought in to support student and operational needs.

We have in place two Memoranda of Agreement with education partners, and who commit to doing the work to make it happen. The environment will reflect our culture and beliefs, and time spent there will cater to honoring the children’s development, interests and growth.

Especially affirmed will be their strength as the next generation of language and knowledge keepers. Alongside the children, families and caretakers will be supported and sustained on their own journey of language acquisition and maintenance through classes, seminars, meetings and various collaborations with the college.

Stay tuned for progress updates and other details about this exciting new venture!

Shi’i ma Bena: we dap Haydosna: we will be centered in the Zuni School District, which allow Student Teacher practicums for early childhood educators (Observation and Student Teaching) to be accomplished locally with highly qualified mentoring teachers assigned from Shiwi Tsana Elementary School.

A:shiwi Tribal College in partnership with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation will soon (Spring 2024) begin planning for two critical community educational events. One, an A:shiwi Language Conference, will help to illuminate how the Zuni School District and other schools in the community may improve educational services and support for our children. The scope of this conference will be Pre-K through Higher Education. We will provide more information as it becomes available, and invite your participation in these two activities.

We continue to recruit and outreach for students and remind all that it is never too late to start your higher education career at A:shiwi Tribal College!

Shiwi Immersion school continues from page 1

The language Immersion school is a special program of A:shiwi Tribal College, with the office housed on campus with Esther Barela, an Early Childhood Education Specialist who has been coordinating the process. A new building is in the early planning stages, and will be located north of the college on the site shown below.

A licensed construction company that builds with straw bale and adobe has been awarded the bid to complete the structure, with groundbreaking slated sometime in the first half of 2024. Plans for specific ages, day-to-day operations and parent support are in the works.

The gift of being able to dream a space such as this is a huge step in the direction of healing, reclaiming, and standing firm in the fact that our identity and language are keys not just to survive, but to thrive.

Shiwi’ ma Bena: we dap Haydosna: we will be centered and delivered entirely in a dedicated space for families of young learners who wish to be true language preservation partners, and who commit to doing the work to make it happen. The environment will reflect our culture and beliefs, and time spent there will cater to honoring the children’s development, interests and growth.

Step into a world of creativity and entrepreneurship with our unique program at A:shiwi Tribal College! At the heart of our initiative is a dedication to preserving traditional Zuni & Native arts. The Zuni School District, which allow Student Teacher practicums for early childhood educators (Observation and Student Teaching) to be accomplished locally with highly qualified mentoring teachers assigned from Shiwi Tsana Elementary School.

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Stay tuned for progress updates and other details about this exciting new venture!

Creative Arts and Entrepreneurship Center at ACCRC: Promoting Zuni Artists Preserves Zuni Tradition

“Dreaming the future is not only a political act, it is an integral part of the historical-social manner of being a person.” Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of Hope, 1991

Step into a world of creativity and entrepreneurship with our unique program at A:shiwi Tribal College! At the heart of our initiative is a dedication to preserving traditional Zuni & Native arts. Our workshops and classes, led by passionate teachers, delve into the intricacies of pottery making, textile crafting, and weaving, fostering a vibrant community of skillful artisans.

But that’s not all – we go beyond the traditional arts. Our one-on-one assistance is tailored to budding entrepreneurs, guiding them through the maze of online presence development. Whether it’s crafting a compelling website, marketing or establishing an online store on platforms best suited for success, we’re here every step of the way.

In our collaborative space, you’ll find more than just guidance. Open computers are at your disposal for updates and applications, ensuring seamless progress. Need striking product images? Our photography services are ready to showcase your creations. Plus, for those seeking the perfect finish for their pottery, we offer firing services for a fee.

Some of our upcoming plans include: Drone pilot certification; Glass Blowing; new technology and fabric design and printing.

And here’s the exciting part – we’re actively on the lookout for talented teachers to join our community. If you’re passionate about sharing your craft, we invite you to be part of our journey, contributing to the enrichment of our creative tapestry.

So, if you want to take a healthy risk and strengthen your entrepreneurial skills in a safe, supportive environment, then join us in celebrating the fusion of traditional arts and entrepreneurial spirit. Discover, create, and grow with our Creative Arts and Entrepreneurship Program!
ZHS Staff Get a Taste of Healthy Eating at Glucose Guardians’ Potluck Challenge

Stepping away from the usual restaurant fare, the staff of Zuni High School recently embarked on a delicious journey into the world of healthy eating, thanks to the Glucose Guardians. This group of teenage diabetes awareness advocates challenged the staff to a friendly potluck competition, demanding dishes that were diabetic-friendly, protein-rich and low in carbs.

Thirteen mouthwatering entries filled the lunchroom, a vibrant tapestry of culinary traditions. From the Philippines, picadillo stew, a savory blend of ground pork, vegetables, and spices, mingled with the familiar comfort of tilapia with quinoa and broccoli, a North American classic. Even pasta made its way onto the table, transformed into a refreshing warm salad with spinach and tomatoes.

"The goal wasn’t just about finding the tastiest dish," explains Kaylia Baca, leader of the Glucose Guardians. "We wanted to show our staff that healthy eating can be exciting and delicious. They’re the role models for our students, and by inspiring them to include just one healthy meal a day, we can make a big impact on the whole school community."

The competition served as a gentle nudge toward mindful eating, highlighting the importance of incorporating fresh or steamed vegetables into daily meals. This simple shift can lower overall calorie intake and offer significant health benefits, especially for those managing diabetes.

“We know diabetes can be intimidating,” says Kaleyah Toya, a member of the Glucose Guardians’ initiative. “But small changes, like swapping fried for steamed vegetables or choosing brown rice over white, can make a world of difference. This potluck was a fun way to open our eyes to the possibilities of healthy eating, and we’re grateful to the teachers for being such positive role models.”

Looking for a great start for your child? Start early with building School Readiness Skills at Zuni Head Start!

Zuni Head Start is recruiting for current School Year 2023-2024. Enrollment slots are available. Call at (505) 782-5758 for more information.
The Zuni Youth Enrichment Project announced today that the 6th annual Delapna:we Project will feature a live performance showcase for the Zuni community at 6 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 16 and 2 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 18 at the Zuni Educational and Cultural Resources Center. Two stories about Suski (Coyote) will be shared through a play titled Suski an Delapna:we.

The Pueblo of Zuni Cultural Education and Resource Department generously approved use of its Zuni Cultural Resource Center during the week of Feb. 11-18 for Ho’n A:wan Productions, a collaboration between the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project, A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center, Edaakie Arts, ShiwiSun Productions, Zuni Public Library, KSHI Radio and other Zuni community members.

Founded in 2018, the Delapna:we Project brings traditional Zuni stories to life through the performing arts. It is made possible with support from the U.S. Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and New Mexico Arts (a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs).

This winter storytelling season, the Delapna:we Project has 23 participants ranging in age from 8 to 56. Since they began working together on January 2, they have been building confidence, practicing voice projection, and developing their acting skills through a mixture of theater activities. They also had opportunities to share the expectations they will carry throughout the duration of the project, which concludes on February 19.

“This includes respecting one another, helping one another, and teaching one another,” explained Kiara “Kiki” Zunie, ZYEP’s youth development coordinator.

In addition, project leaders are incorporating the Zuni language throughout the activities. This gives participants a variety of opportunities to learn, practice, and become more comfortable with speaking the language out loud and with others.

“One major highlight this month was Family Night, which took place on Thursday, January 4,” Zunie said.

“Our participants and their families were invited to a night of Delapna:we. Our project leaders welcomed them and shared a little about themselves, and then Keith Edaakie and Leanne Lee from Edaakie Arts gave a presentation and led an engaging activity that allowed families to interact and create their own stories.”

Throughout the month, ZYEP’s Food Sovereignty team has been preparing delicious snacks for the Delapna:we leaders, participants and supporters. These include tortilla stew with blue corn muffins, homemade jerky with hambassa (chinchweed) in partnership with Major Market Inc., and mini pizzas. During Family Night, the team provided burrito bowls for everyone.

“They were so good,” Zunie recalled. “The team received a lot of compliments from the families in attendance. They are in the process of creating a cookbook for families to take home due to the large number of requests for recipes!”

While the families ate, Curtis Quam, director of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center, shared video footage documenting life in Zuni in 1923. He also provided historical context about Delapna:we.

Norene Lonasee, ZYEP youth development leader, then played 1960s audio recordings of Zuni elders sharing the stories selected for this year’s Delapna:we Project performance. She shared part of the script with families as well, giving them a preview of what they can expect during the February 16 and 18 live performances.

These stories are priceless treasures for the Zuni people. After being shared and passed down for generations, they were in danger of being lost forever by the mid-20th century. Fortunately, the Doris Duke Foundation in New York provided necessary funding in the 1960s so the Zuni community could record 19 elders sharing more than 800 stories.
Zuni Youth Enrichment Project Celebrates 15 Years; Reflects on 2023 Highlights

The Zuni Youth Enrichment Project celebrated its 15th anniversary this year, a major milestone for a grassroots, nonprofit youth project that started in 2009 with a small summer camp for Zuni children. Now, 15 years later, ZYEP is a nationally recognized, Zuni-led organization with robust programming in physical activity, food sovereignty, art, and youth development.

That first summer camp started with just 20 participants. Today, ZYEP serves more than 1,000 young people each year and remains dedicated to building strong intergenerational relationships, increasing resilience, and providing healthy, nurturing spaces and fun, enriching programs.

“It's a blessing to reach this milestone,” said Tahlia Natachu-Eriacho, ZYEP’s executive director. “Our theme this year was ‘Honoring the Past and Shaping Tomorrow.’ To be raised by this organization myself, to be part of the team today, and now to have my children join ZYEP programs fills my heart — and fulfills a traditional Zuni value, that we must care for our youth and continue the traditions that make our people resilient.”

“I want to express my deepest and most sincere gratitude to every person who contributed to this organization through development, feedback, trust, participation, acknowledgement, support and belief, including the incredible people who first came together in 2009 with a beautiful, innovative vision. The amount of care in this work is the reason it has such significant impact. We honor those who built ZYEP, and we will protect and carry forward their legacy for the sake of our future generations.”

Physical Activity

Physical activity is a Zuni tradition, and to honor that, ZYEP provides a variety of Youth Sport opportunities for youth to build self-confidence, develop physical health, and forge connections with mentors and peers. The soccer league began in 2009, the basketball league in 2010, and flag football league in 2016. A 2023 highlight was the addition of a T-ball league. Forty 4- and 5-year-old players learned a new sport together while their family members cheered from the sidelines; going forward, this new league will be a staple of ZYEP summer programming.

When asked what he enjoyed most about this summer’s league, Lee Lucio said, “Coming out here, getting exercise with the granddaughters (Bella and Hailey), meeting all the different parents and kids. It really was enjoyable, a lot of fun.

“Back when their mom and uncle were going to school here, we didn’t have any of these activities for the summer,” he continued. “It really helps the kids in our community to be involved in these programs here.”

Over time, ZYEP hopes to add indoor spaces for year-round sports, create a Zuni soccer league so
OMICRON XBB.1.5 VARIANT

What is the Omicron XBB.1.5 Variant?
(1) The Omicron XBB.1.5 variant is more contagious than any other COVID variant so far. It contains more mutations, making it hard for your immune system to build immunity. It also has a mutation that helps the virus attach to cells, making it easier to transmit.

What are symptoms of the Omicron XBB.1.5 subvariant?
(2) Symptoms include runny nose, sore throat, and cold-like symptoms.

If I’m exposed, how long will it take for me to feel the symptoms?
(3) Symptoms will appear 5 days after being exposed. You will be contagious 1-2 days before your symptoms began, and 2-3 days after your symptoms ease.

Who can get sick?
(4) Anyone can get sick from the Omicron XBB.1.5 variant. People with diabetes or heart disease are at higher risk for complications and death.

How can I protect myself, my family and my community from Omicron?
(5) The COVID Monovalent vaccine is available to anyone 6 months old and older. The following groups of people are highly encouraged to be vaccinated: 50 years and older; immunocompromised, those with chronic medical conditions; and pregnant women.

How will the vaccine help me?
(6) The vaccine will send host cells into the body and instructs it to make a spike protein (immunity). The immune system will then learn to recognize and attack the real COVID spike protein if you become exposed to the COVID virus.

What does a spike protein do?
(7) The spike protein allows the virus to enter the host cells and causes the COVID infection.

How many shots will I need to get of the COVID Monovalent vaccine?
(5) 5 years and older will only need 1 shot. Children 6 months to 4 years old may need more than one shot depending on previous COVID vaccines received.

Where can I get the COVID Vaccine?
The COVID vaccine is available at Zuni IHS Hospital. Please call (505) 782-4431 to obtain information or contact your Primary Care Provider.

1 Omicron XBB.1.5 ‘Kraken’ Subvariant is on the Rise, Yale Medicine, 02/10/2023
2. Omicron and Subvariants: A Guide to what we know, Yale Medicine, 09/01/2023
3. What You Need to Know About XBB.1.5, The Latest Omicron Variant, John Hopkins 01/06/2023
4. The Updated COVID Vaccines Are Here: 10 Things We Need to Know, Yale Medicine, 10/04/2023
5. Stay Up to Date with COVID Vaccines, CDC, 01/10/2024
6. Comparing the COVID Vaccines: How Are They Different?, Yale Medicine, 10/05/2023
7. What Are Spike Proteins, News-Medical Life Sciences, 02/24/2021

For additional information contact Shumak’olo:wa Health Center Community Health Representative (CHR) at (505) 782-5719
ZYEP @ 15 continues from last page

"I like that ZYEP helps me learn more about our culture, and they are teaching me how to be stronger and healthier," said Liam Poncho, 8. "And I like the healthy snacks they give me!

I appreciate that ZYEP gives us a place where different people from different families can get together and do projects together," said his mother, Karen Poncho. "They always welcome you to come as you are, and remind you that it’s never too late to learn."

In 2023, ZYEP’s food sovereignty initiatives helped the Pueblo of Zuni receive the 2023 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize, which celebrates communities at the forefront of advancing fair and just opportunities for health.

Going forward, the staff dreams of larger kitchen space for cooking demonstrations, additional community gardens and fields for outdoor learning, increased water catchment systems, expansion of the ancestral Zuni food systems curriculum, and a larger capacity for harvesting, processing and distributing food resources.

The Arts

Like physical activity and food sovereignty, art lies at the heart of the Zuni community. The Delapna:we Project, Emerging and Advanced Artist Apprenticeships, and art instruction through in-school, after-school and community-wide initiatives enhance Zuni youth’s capacity for self-expression and well-being, and they contribute to the preservation of Zuni language, traditions and culture.

In 2023, ZYEP enrolled 43 young people in the art apprenticeship program, which gave them opportunities to connect with master artists, build their art portfolios, show and sell their art, strengthen their financial literacy, and develop the skills necessary to build an art career.

"I sold everything I created, which was amazing," said LaShea "Shea" Harris, who completed an Advanced Artist Apprenticeship in Zuni embroidery. "I was shocked to find such a market for this work; it's in high demand. I understand the time and effort that goes into the work, and I have a heightened appreciation and gratitude for the garments I've been gifted in my own life."

Going forward, ZYEP would like to add open studio and gallery spaces for youth, and expanded curriculum to strengthen cultural understanding of Zuni art forms, expanded apprenticeships, and needed equipment for teaching multiple art forms.

Youth Development

ZYEP also is dedicated to providing opportunities for youth development. A particular highlight of 2023 was concluding the first school year of “Rooted in Healthy Traditions,” the youth project’s after-school program.

Intended to serve youth in the critical years before and during middle school, this new program provides programming in art, physical activity, food sovereignty and Zuni language. During the 2022-23 school year, RHT served 100 children, and it’s on track to do the same in 2023-24.

Staff envision a future with increased internship opportunities, expanded training opportunities for both youth mentors and interns, expanded career development support, and stronger youth connections to Zuni language and culture.

To support the organization as it pursues this ongoing mission in the Zuni community, simply visit zyep.org/join-us-donate/.

Do you know your NUMBERS?

Numbers? What do you mean by “numbers”?

It means, your numbers for A1C, Glucose, Blood Pressure, and Body Mass Index

A1C:
What is A1C?
Your A1C number determines if you are a person living with or without Diabetes. The A1C test is of your average blood sugar over the past three months. So, what does my A1C number mean?
A1C test results are reported as a percentage number. The higher the number, the more sugar there is in your blood.

A “Normal” A1C is anything under 5.7%.
If your A1C is between 5.7-6.5%, your levels indicate Pre-Diabetes.
If your A1C is over 6.5%, your levels indicate Diabetes.

Glucose:
What about Glucose (Blood Sugar)?
Glucose Tests screen for daily sugar levels These tests can be done before you have eaten something, which is called “Fasting,” or after you have eaten, which is called “Random.”

What should my Blood Sugar Number be?
For a Person WITHOUT Diabetes:
Fasting Period: 99 mg/dL or Lower
Random Period: 126 mg/dL or Lower

For a Person WITH Diabetes:
Fasting Period: 140 mg/dL or Lower
Random Period: 200 mg/dL or Lower

What can happen if a person does not control their Diabetes?
– Eye Disease – Foot Problems/Possibl amputation – Gum Disease – Nerve Problems such as numbing and tingling – High Blood Pressure, which can lead to Heart Disease/Stroke – Kidney Disease and need to go through Dialysis

How is a Glucose Test different from an A1C?
Glucose Tests are done DAILY to determine if what you have eaten is raising your blood sugar, or maintaining your sugar levels. A1C is a test that is done EVERY 3 MONTHS.

Get your numbers checked at:
Zuni Healthy Lifestyles Program
1 Route 301 North
(Next to the WIC Building)
Zuni, NM 87327
Phone: 505-782-3091/2929
Hours: 8:00am - 5:00pm
Students Services Promote College Life at ACCRC

A:shiwi Tribal College Student Services is open daily for student needs. We help with registration, class enrollment, advising, FAFSA assistance, tutoring and social networking. We work together to help students achieve their educational goals and needs by providing a space for studying.

We also have weekly and monthly events for A:shiwi College students to socialize with staff, community, and other students in the college setting.

Soon we will offer student training for job searches and resume and cover letter writing, along with assistance with scholarship searches and applications, and tips and etiquette for interviews.

We will be bringing some of these training opportunities to our campus to help the students and the Zuni community succeed through college-level achievement.

We work with Navajo Technical University student services once per month to bring additional student service opportunities. Staff from the main campus come to help the students with books, counseling services, accommodation services, advising, and other resources for A:shiwi College students.

Come by the student services department and talk to Laura Leekela and Raelynn Seowtewa for more information about admissions, registration, and other educational support needs.

You can reach us by phone at (505) 782-6020/6022.

**FAFSA Night Schedule**
- January 24 – 5 to 7pm
- February 7 – 5 to 7pm
- February 21 – 5 to 7pm

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