

ARIZONA PRC

Championing Community Health Worker Effectiveness in Arizona and Beyond

1

Dissemination

•Event Spotlight: Discover the AZCHOW Roots CHW & Binational Health Conferences taking place this summer.

2

State wide

•SOSA Spotlight: Yara Castro & Tsion Meles Shine at AzPHA, Presenting Collaborative Initiatives.

3

Center news

•MINDSET & CPRN highlighting recent achievements.
•CHW enumeration project.

2024 in Focus: Unveiling the Exciting Start and First Quarter Highlights!

Inside: Meet Our New Research Manager and Explore Publications Fueling Progress in 2024

Our Latest Cover:

AI x CAB - On this edition we created an artistic AI rendering. Witness innovation and creativity intertwine in this captivating depiction of our "AzPRC center, community, & team"

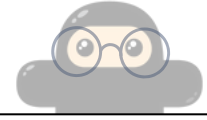


Some words used for AI Prompt: Promotora, Arizona, Saguaro, CHWs, Community



Editor's Letter

Exciting News from the Arizona Prevention Research Center



Dear Readers,

As the 2024 year gains momentum, we are excited to announce that we have been recommended for funding for the upcoming 2024-2029 CDC PRC grant cycle. We are grateful for the opportunity to continue our important work, which underscores our center's dedication to advancing public health.

In this edition, we're thrilled to highlight two major events: the 21st Anniversary of Roots, the CHW conference hosted by AZCHOW, and the binational "Border Health Information for Action" conference co-hosted by the AzPRC, both taking place this summer. These events serve as crucial platforms for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and advancing our collective efforts in promoting community health.

Additionally, the Participatory Evaluation Institute continues to make significant strides, empowering communities to actively engage in evaluating public health programs. Through this initiative, we are fostering meaningful partnerships and ensuring that community voices are heard and valued in our work.

Furthermore, we're thrilled to welcome new members to our team, bringing fresh perspectives and expertise to our projects. Their contributions will undoubtedly enhance our efforts in addressing public health challenges and advancing our mission.

Looking ahead, we anticipate a dynamic year filled with innovation, collaboration, and meaningful impact. Thank you for your continued support.

best,

Ramses Sepulveda
on Behalf of the
Arizona Prevention Research Center



2024 AzCHOW Roots Conference



*Join AzCHOW for Roots 2024: CHW's Heartbeat:
Paving the Way for Health Equity in Arizona*

Taking place on **June 26-27, 2024**, at the **Gila River Resorts & Casinos - Wild Horse Pass in Phoenix, Arizona**, this milestone event marks 21 years of the conference and its dedication to CHW resilience.

At Roots 2024, CHWs will have the opportunity to network, learn, and grow through special trainings designed to enhance their skills and knowledge. Beyond professional development, Roots is a time for celebration, honoring outstanding CHWs who have made exceptional contributions to their communities. Join AzCHOW for a special recognition ceremony, where we express gratitude for the remarkable impact CHWs have made.

Don't miss this chance to be a part of the movement towards health equity in Arizona. Mark your calendars and join us at Roots 2024. Together, let's strengthen the community health worker workforce and create a healthier future for all.

Visit [AzCHOW.org](https://www.azchow.org) to learn more and register today.

Border Health: Information for Action Conference



Border Health: Information for Action
Salud Fronteriza Información Para La Acción

Join us for the eagerly awaited return of the "Border Health: Information for Action" conference! Scheduled for **April 19, 2024**, we'll convene at the **Nogales Sonora Museum of Art** from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Prepare to engage with researchers, community organizations, and health workers sharing insights on promoting healthy communities in the Arizona-Sonora border region. Topics will include Environmental Health, Infectious and Vector Borne Disease, Health Promotion, Migration, and Farmworkers. Plus, we're inviting abstracts for health-related posters. Registration is just \$20, waived for accepted poster presenters. Stay tuned for registration details.

We're counting down the days until we meet in **Nogales on April 19!**

For further inquiries, please reach out to colefnoales@colef.mx.
To register for the event visit the [eventbrite link by clicking here](#).



Study of opioid stewardship program implementation in rural and critical access hospitals in Arizona published in Journal of Opioid Management

Benjamin Brady, DrPH; Bianca SantaMaria, MPH; Kathryn Tucker Ortiz y Pino, MPH; Bridget S. Murphy, DBH

We are pleased to announce the publication of a recent study, supported by faculty and staff from the Arizona Center for Rural Health, the [Arizona Prevention Research Center Participatory Evaluation Institute](#), and Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, in the January/February issue of the Journal of Opioid Management. This study delves into the implementation of opioid stewardship program (OSP) elements in rural hospitals, with a particular focus on assessing differences in implementation between emergency department (ED) and acute inpatient departments.

The opioid crisis continues to pose significant challenges to public health, particularly in rural communities where access to resources may be limited. Understanding the status of OSP implementation in these settings is crucial for developing targeted interventions to address opioid misuse and overdose deaths effectively.

Through a comprehensive examination of OSP elements, this study provides valuable insights into the current landscape of opioid harm prevention efforts in rural hospitals. By assessing variations in implementation across different healthcare departments, the study sheds light on areas that require further attention and standardization.

We invite you to explore the full article to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in implementing OSPs in rural healthcare settings. [Click here to access the complete publication](#) and learn alongside us as we strive to advance evidence-based strategies to combat the opioid crisis in underserved communities.

AzPHA 2024: Conference

Phoenix, Arizona



This year, the Arizona Public Health Association Annual Conference focused on the ongoing opioid crisis in Arizona. The sessions of the conference covered cross-sector collaboration initiatives, prevention, treatment, intervention, harm reduction, and data related to the opioid crisis. This year, the Santa Cruz County Overcoming Addiction (SOSA) Consortium and the Participatory Evaluation Institute collaborated on a presentation about the Consortium's process to identify gaps in services for youth and young adults in the County and the collaborative steps partners have taken to address behavioral health disparities. SOSA Consortium is a network of organizations engaged in prevention, treatment, recovery, and workforce development to address substance abuse use disorder in Santa Cruz County. The PEI and Consortium leadership engaged in a collaborative mapping and planning activity to discuss how to reach the populations most impacted by substance abuse and behavioral health disparities in Santa Cruz County. The process included establishing partnership

guidelines, identifying priority communities, identifying existing community resources/services, identifying service gaps, and formulating action plans and evaluations to determine success and challenges. Through this process, with the support of key community partners, youth (8–18-year-olds) and young adults (18–24-year-olds) were identified as priority populations for the Consortium due to their high risk of substance use disorder and opioid use disorder. Since establishing the action plans, the Consortium has increased engagement within the priority population and created more youth/young adult-focused interventions, health promotions, and after-hours services to reduce barriers to engagement and involvement with multiple community partners such as law enforcement. The SOSA Consortium continues its sustainability efforts, establishing strong community ties and being consistent with solid community collaboration.

2.



3.



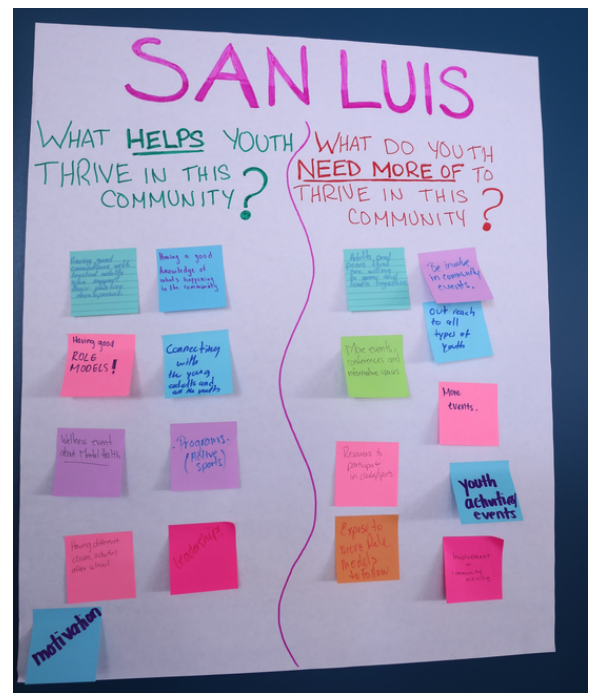
1. AzPHA logo
2./3. Yara Castro, Health and Social Services Manager for Mariposa Community Health Center, and Tsion Meles, Graduate Research Assistant with the Participatory Evaluation Institute, present at the 2024 Arizona Public Health Association Annual Conference. The PEI is the evaluation partner for the SOSA Consortium.



2THRIVE Initiative

Yuma & Somerton, Arizona

The Campesinos Sin Fronteras 2THRIVE Initiative uses a family-focused, multisector approach to prevent teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, and to improve adolescent mental health in Yuma County, Arizona. 2THRIVE provides evidence-based programming in public schools in San Luis alongside leadership and career programming, and recently expanded their reach to neighboring cities of Somerton and Yuma. After significant efforts to build new partnerships, 2THRIVE launched the Teen Outreach Program (TOP) in Somerton Middle School in late February 2024, bringing this evidence-based program and supportive services to 250 more youth who will benefit from high quality positive youth development programming. New collaborations with Hidden Valley Strength and Condition and Strength and Unity Foundation gyms will foster a culture of fitness among teens by integrating their programs and a unique six-week exercise bootcamp into the 2THRIVE experience. Community interest in joining the 2THRIVE movement is growing, with additional schools throughout the county invested in offering TOP to their students in the 2024-2025 academic year. Learn more about how you can join the [2THRIVE Initiative here](#).



2THRIVE is also gearing up to celebrate their successes with the Peer Educator program, which empowers youth to be community leaders and inform program planning for their peers. The Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs, or AMCHP, is a national leader in convening professionals improving conditions and health outcomes for women and children. 2THRIVE was invited to participate in a panel of experts at this conference and to showcase their Peer Educator program and lessons learned along the way. Look out for Marlene and Jesus, a Peer Educator alum who has been hired as a TOP Youth Facilitator, at this conference in Oakland in April! Learn more about the conference here: <https://amchp.org/amchp-conference/>

Counting CHWs: Inside the Enumeration Project

We sat down with Aaron Heras, AzPRC GRA, to delve into the meticulous process behind the Enumeration Project and gain insight straight from the source. We asked Aaron, 'Could you tell us about your experience with the project?'



Courtesy of AzCHOW Cumbre de Promotoras 2024

Aaron: The Enumeration Project is a rigorous effort to get a count of all or nearly all community health workers in Arizona. This project was first researched and planned by meeting with individuals who have worked and counted CHWs in the past, learning about different methods from contacting organizations individually, creating a survey, and using external sources of labor statistics. The research process taught us what methods and resources would work best for the project. We decided that a good first step was to create an organizational inventory consisting of organizations we believe are involved with CHWS. We planned to use our prior projects on CHWs, our collaborations, and CHW coalitions to find and create this list.

We first decided to create an initial pilot study in Pima County by working with the Pima County CHW coalition which was organized primarily by our partners AzCHOW. They had already begun developing an organizational list of CHW organizations in Pima County. They obtained information by having attendees fill in their information and what organization they work for. I helped add to the list by using information on organizations hiring CHWs from AzPRC's previous projects on CHWs. After creating a large list, we focused on confirming if the organizations hired CHWs by finding contacts and asking if they work with CHWs.

Once the pilot was over, I began creating an organizational list of the entire state of Arizona. This was done by having separate tabs in the main Google sheet representing each county. Later on, a community health representative (CHR) list was created to better categorize and represent their work with tribal nations. The sheet contained information regarding an organization's name, contact information, address, comment, and confirmation if the organization worked with CHWs. Names and information of organizations were found by using a previous CHW project on hiring organizations, the Arizona CHW listserv, a list provided by AzCHOW, and various CHW coalition meetings (Pima CHW Coalition, Cumbre de Promotores, CHR Leader meeting, etc.).

After exhausting all sources of information in developing the list, our next step was hiring liaisons who have experience as CHWs and are well-connected to organizations working with CHWs in their area. Their job is to help add to the list and contact organizations that are in their area to confirm the exact number of full-time, part-time, and volunteer CHWs they hire.

Right now, we have two liaisons working on the Maricopa County list as it contains the most organizations out of any county. The other two liaisons are working on the Northern Arizona and tribal nations lists. I am currently working on contacting the remaining counties including Pima, Yuma, Santa Cruz, and others.

WEST EJ Center Kicks Off by Presenting Services to Increase Environmental Justice for Historically Marginalized Communities

Nina Sajovec Altshul, Haury Program



In June 2023, the University of Arizona received a \$10 million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish the Western Environmental Science Technical Assistance Center for Environmental Justice (WEST EJ Center) over five years. This initiative aims to promote environmental justice, as defined in Executive Order 14096, by ensuring fair treatment and meaningful involvement in environmental matters for all communities. Despite the EPA's mission for clean air, land, and water, historically marginalized communities continue to face barriers due to various factors.

WEST EJ Center, part of the EPA's Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers, commenced operations on January 24th, 2024, hosting a virtual event attended by 160 participants. The event introduced the Center and offered breakout sessions in English and Spanish covering topics such as grants navigation, community leadership, and technical expertise. Participants also provided feedback and expressed community needs.

Dr. Paloma I. Beamer, the Center's Director, emphasized its foundation on Environmental Justice Principles established at the First People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991. These principles prioritize respect for Mother Earth, diverse cultures, and decolonization methods, ensuring self-determination and environmental justice for all. Dr. Nathan Lothrop, Associate Director, highlighted the Center's approach of meeting communities where they are and fostering mutual learning through discussions.

The Center operates on a hub-and-spoke model, with the University of Arizona serving as the central hub. Units within the university, including the Indigenous Resilience Center (IRes) and the Participatory Evaluation Institute at the Arizona Prevention Research Center, collaborate with partner organizations across EPA's Region 9. These partners, including the Public Health Institute, University of Southern California, University of Nevada, Reno, Hawai'i Public Health Institute, and Environmental Protection Network, possess extensive community-based networks and expertise in environmental and energy justice.

WEST EJ Center provides various services, including free grants navigation, community leadership development, advocacy training, and technical assistance in research study design and environmental justice data mapping. Community resource fairs, student internships, and advocacy resources further support their mission.

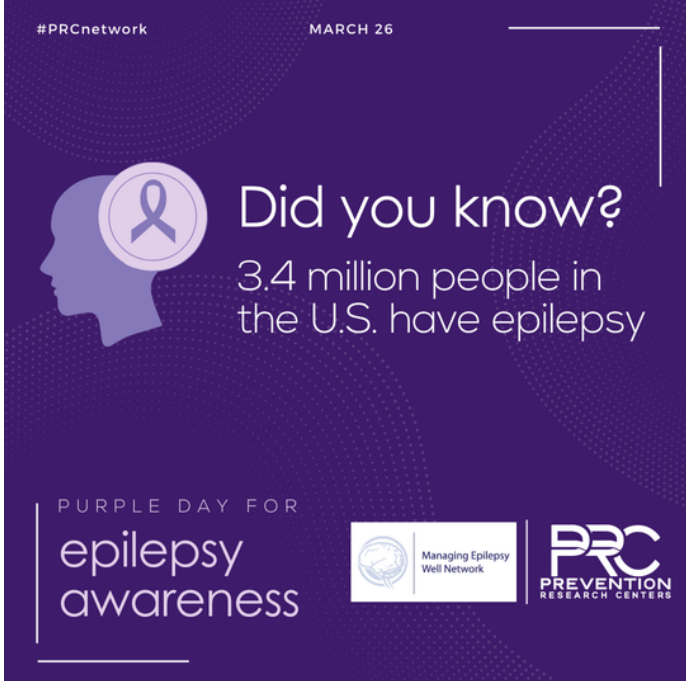
For organizations seeking assistance with environmental or energy justice challenges, WEST EJ Center offers comprehensive support. Visit westejcenter.arizona.edu/how-we-can-help to explore available resources and opportunities.

March 2024, Tucson Arizona

MINDSET Article Reveals Positive Impact on Epilepsy Management Among Hispanic Patients

We're excited to announce a milestone for our special interest project MINDSET, a proud member of the Managing Epilepsy Well (MEW) network. Recently, the Arizona team had an article published that dives into the experiences of Hispanic patients with epilepsy using the MINDSET mobile health app for self-management. This article sheds light on the invaluable insights gained from the Arizona's team research, highlighting the positive impact MINDSET has had on epilepsy management within the Hispanic community.

The article explores the experiences of Hispanic patients with epilepsy using the MINDSET mobile health app for self-management. Conducted as part of a larger study, 42 participants engaged in semi-structured interviews after using MINDSET. The findings revealed several key themes: increased awareness of epilepsy self-management, improved communication with healthcare providers, enhanced quality of life, better seizure control, and a sense of empowerment. Despite some challenges, participants viewed MINDSET positively as a valuable tool for managing their condition. This study underscores the importance of tailored interventions like MINDSET in addressing the unique needs of diverse patient populations and promoting health equity in epilepsy care.



#PRCnetwork MARCH 26

Did you know?
3.4 million people in the U.S. have epilepsy

PURPLE DAY FOR
epilepsy
awareness

Managing Epilepsy Well Network

PRC
PREVENTION
RESEARCH CENTERS

Further research and development of digital health interventions are warranted to enhance their effectiveness and accessibility for underserved communities like Hispanics with epilepsy.

To learn more about the groundbreaking research and the impact of MINDSET on epilepsy self-management among Hispanic patients, we invite you to access the full article titled 'Experiences of using the MINDSET Self-Management mobile health app among Hispanic Patients: Results of a qualitative study' in the journal *Epilepsy & Behavior*.

The article was authored by Refugio Sepulveda, Jenny Chong, Ross Shegog, Kimberly Martin, Charles Begley, Robert Addy, Omar Rosales, Tomas Nuño, Shiela Soto, Cecilia Rosales, and David Labiner.

[Click here to read the article.](#)



PURPLE DAY FOR
epilepsy
awareness

CPCR N Special 20th Anniversary Publication Includes MEZCOPH Researchers

Join us in commemorating the Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network's (CPCR N) remarkable 20th-anniversary milestone! In honor of this occasion, a special issue in *Cancer Causes and Control* features contributions from the Arizona Prevention Research Center at the University of Arizona.

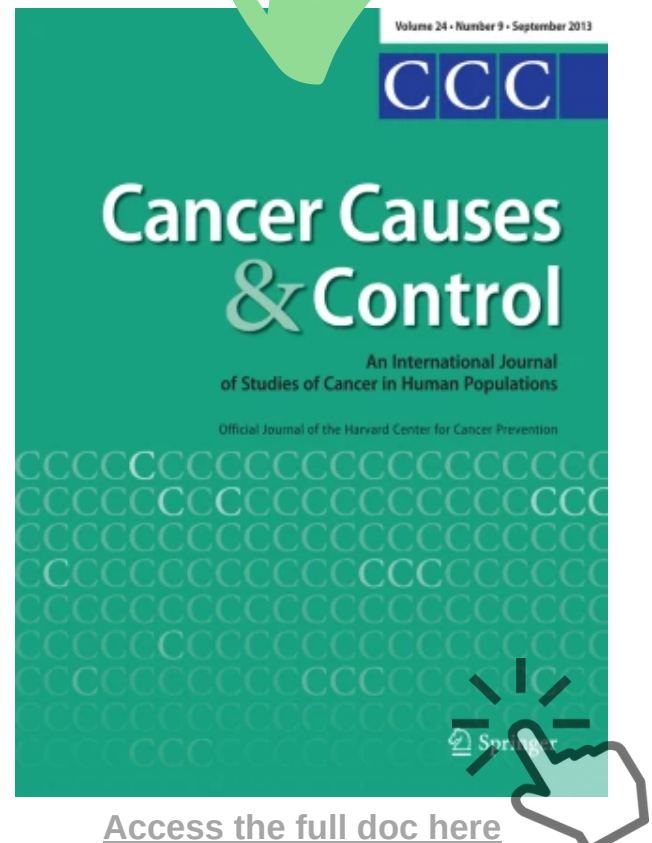
Within this exclusive supplement, you'll uncover 21 articles exploring vital themes such as addressing cancer prevention disparities, fostering community engagement, and charting future priorities. Each article represents a collaborative effort to advance our understanding of cancer prevention and control.

Dr. Cynthia Thomson, Principal Investigator of the Arizona CPCR N, shares insights into the local impact of this research endeavor. "We have had the privilege to partner with The Mariposa and Chiricahua Federally Qualified Health Centers in our local efforts to improve cancer screening and wellness for cancer survivors in our Arizona communities."

Supported by CDC funding, including a substantial \$1.4 million grant, progress is being made in cancer prevention and control science, with a special focus on the unique health needs of Hispanic cancer survivors. The network boasts a diverse team of 29 members, engaging in cross-center collaborations and supporting scholars' program development.

Dr. Thomson's leadership underscores the transformative power of partnerships forged over the past two decades.

The special supplement, published open access by SpringerNature, stands as a testament to CPCR N's dedication to cancer research excellence. Explore [the full publication by visiting this link here](#).



[Access the full doc here](#)

AzPRC PEOPLE EXPO

Why a people expo? - The AzPRC and its affiliated projects are one large community, from a zoom meeting, to a road trip to different sites across the state, these are the familiar faces our community attributes the Arizona PRC to. We would like to dedicate this portion of the newsletter to highlight our graduate student and professional staff; enjoy!



Alexia Flores
Graduate Research
Assistant

Alexia Flores (she/her), Graduate Research Assistant, is driven by her passion for health and wellness, with a focus on addressing disparities in minority communities and maternal/fetal healthcare. An Alum from the UofA's Public Health's undergraduate program, she is now a first year MPH student. At the AzPRC, she's involved in the undergraduate engagement initiative, as well as assisting with program evaluations. Beyond work, Alexia enjoys watching movies, reading, hiking, and spending time with her dogs. Her mantra, "Never let time stop you from achieving your goals," guides her determination. During her time at the AzPRC, she aims to successfully implement the undergraduate program and contribute to meaningful initiatives, including the Binational Network Conference.



Aaron Heras Jr.
Graduate Research
Assistant

Aaron Heras Jr. (he/him/él), Graduate Research Assistant, driven by a passion for addressing health disparities, and is currently pursuing a Master's in Public Health with a focus on Epidemiology. At the Arizona PRC, he's involved in projects such as enumerating community health worker organizations in Arizona and assisting with binational coalition efforts. Beyond work, Aaron enjoys traveling and exploring new cuisines. His personal motto, "Sana, sana, colita de rana. Si no sanas hoy, sanarás mañana," reflects his resilience. During his time at the AzPRC, he aims to gain diverse experiences, build lasting relationships, and make a positive impact on research and community initiatives.



Maisun Maliha
Graduate Research
Assistant

Maisun Maliha Ansary (she/her), Graduate Research Assistant, is a second-year PhD student in Health Behavior Health Promotion at the University of Arizona's college of public health. She is originally from Bangladesh and earned her MPH from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She has worked at the UNC Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) where she gained qualitative research experience and engaged with diverse populations facing highly stigmatized conditions. Maisun will be supporting the Participatory Evaluation Institute for the Suicide Prevention program under AZDHS.

Meet Andi Medrano

AzPRC Core Research Manager

Andi earned their Master of Social Work from the University of Washington in Seattle, where they dedicated the past 4 years to community-based non-profits. In their last position at NAMI Seattle, Andi coordinated peer-led mental health programs and led efforts in Spanish-language and LGBTQ+ programming. Before venturing into the non-profit sector, Andi spent 8 years contributing to mental health research in Arizona and Wisconsin, including at the University of Arizona. A southern Arizona native, Andi is glad to return to their roots in their role as the Core Research Manager for UNIDOS at the Arizona Prevention Research Center and work in the communities they grew up in.



ANDI MEDRANO
& BOOGER

Andi, with deep roots in Nogales, Arizona, brings a profound connection to the border community. Having spent their formative years in Nogales, Andi's return to Tucson is marked by a sense of nostalgia and longing for the desert landscape they once called home. Since their return, Andi has been immersing themselves in the unique flora of the region, particularly the iconic cacti that dot the landscape. They've taken up the hobby of capturing moments with these prickly plants, indulging in the trend of cacti selfies to document their journey of rediscovery and connection with the desert environment.



ANDI'S NEWEST
HOBBY: SELFIES
WITH CACTI

ANDI'S
ROOMMATE &
FUR BABY:
BOOGER

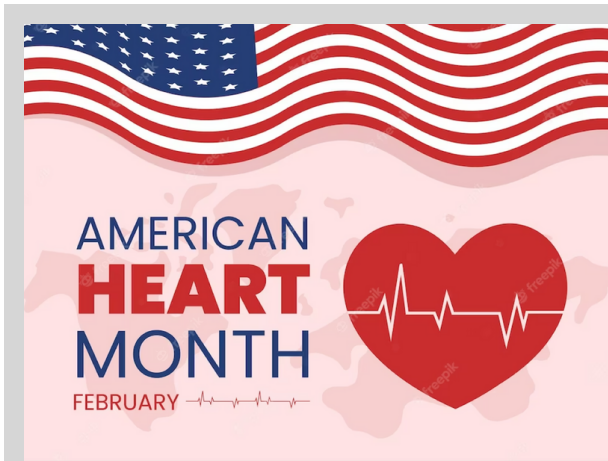


Meet Booger, Andi's cherished feline companion since college. Booger, with his mischievous antics and endearing personality, has been a constant source of joy throughout Andi's life, no matter where their adventures have taken them. Ever since Andi finished their college years in Tucson, booger has been a steadfast companion through every move and transition. Whether he's playfully batting at shadows or curling up for a cozy nap, Booger's presence has provided comfort and companionship through all of life's ups and downs. Andi couldn't imagine their journey without their loyal and beloved furball by their side. If you are lucky, you may even meet him on a zoom call!



Pictured above is one of dozens of Cacti pictures captured by Andi.

Since returning **home**, Andi has discovered a newfound passion for capturing the beauty of the Sonoran Desert through photography. Armed with their smartphone, Andi sets out and treats every day as an adventure to document the diverse array of cacti and palm trees that adorn the landscape. From the majestic Saguaro cacti standing tall against the desert sky to the intricate barrel cacti and the whimsical shapes of the prickly pear, Andi's iPhone lens captures the essence of each unique species. With each click of the shutter, they immortalize the vibrant hues and intricate details of these desert inhabitants. And among the towering cacti, Andi finds solace and inspiration; each snapshot serves as a friendly reminder of the place they grew up, reinforcing that there's truly no place like home.



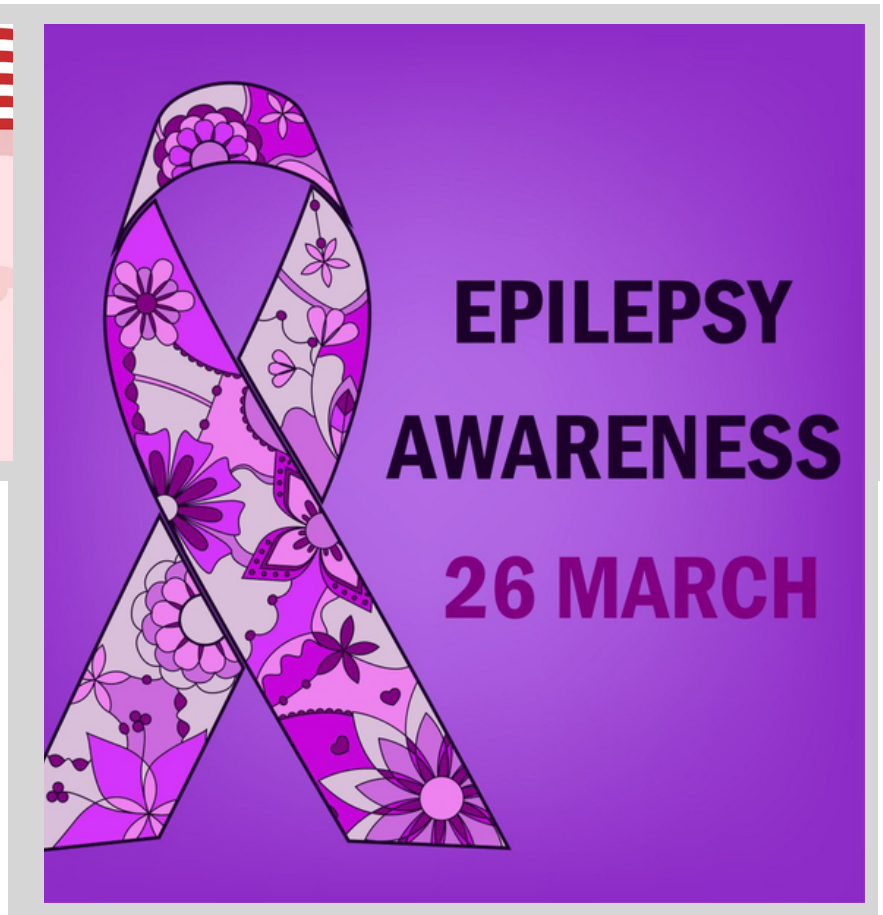
AzPRC News

Join us on our upcoming journey with the Arizona PRC as we bid farewell to the LINKS project and gear up for our next endeavor, the Together Across Generations (TAG) core research project. We're thrilled to announce that we've been recommended for funding for the 2024-2029 grant cycle, setting the stage for exciting new opportunities.

As we transition, our team will be diligently closing out the LINKS project while laying the groundwork for TAG. This process involves reflection on our successes and lessons learned, ensuring a seamless transition and impactful research outcomes.

In addition to our core research, we're excited about the potential for Special Interest Projects (SIPs) to accompany our grant. These projects will allow us to explore innovative ideas and address emerging public health challenges, further enriching our mission and impact.

Stay tuned for updates as we navigate this exciting chapter together. The Arizona PRC remains committed to advancing community health and wellness, and we're grateful for your continued support. Let's make a difference across generations.



Social Media

Every month the AzPRC participates in the monthly social media campaigns in collaboration with the CDC. The following efforts were highlighted across our social media sites and all the participating PRC's in the communication committee. Following are the campaigns for February & March.

February: CPCRN

This month, we highlighted the CPCRN 20th anniversary supplement for Cancer Prevention Month as well as American Heart Month. In December 2023, CPCRN published a special issue of Cancer Causes and Control marking its 20th anniversary. Join us in congratulating CPCRN!

Additionally, American Heart Month focuses on cardiovascular health and preventing heart disease. Contact us for toolkits from the CDC and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute for resources to promote awareness.

March Social Media Highlights: Nutrition and Epilepsy Awareness Initiatives

In March, our social media campaign amplified National Nutrition Month and Epilepsy Awareness Day (Purple Day/March 26th). We were dedicated to sharing valuable resources, events, and organizations like the Nutrition & Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (NOPREN), fostering nutrition education and policy research. Simultaneously, we raised crucial awareness about epilepsy, spotlighting the impactful efforts of the MEW network supporting individuals living with the condition.

Joined us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to support nutrition education and epilepsy awareness throughout the month, as we united in fostering healthier communities and advocating for those affected by epilepsy.

Community Action Board

The Community *Action* Board of the AzPRC plays a vital role in guiding the center's activities and initiatives. This esteemed board convenes quarterly to engage in meaningful discussions about the center, its various projects, and public health efforts, particularly focusing on the US-Mexico border region, rural communities, and tribal populations. Comprising of approximately 25 dedicated members, the board's overarching theme centers around championing the community health worker (CHW) workforce. These passionate individuals collaborate to enhance the impact and effectiveness of CHWs in addressing health disparities and promoting equitable health outcomes. For further details and to learn more about the Arizona Prevention Research Center, please visit azprc.arizona.edu.

Issue Contributors:

Mariposa Community Health Center

Department of Mexican American Studies, The University of Arizona

Arizona Community Health Worker Association (AzCHOW)

Campesinos Sin Fronteras

Center for Disease Control and Prevention PRC Communication Committee

University of Arizona's Participatory Evaluation Institute

Chiricahua Community Health Center

The University of Arizona Prevention Research Center, 1295 N. Martin Ave. Tucson Arizona 85721 | Phone: 520-626-5682 | ramses@email.arizona.edu www.azprc.arizona.edu. The Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health Arizona Prevention Research Center is a member of the Prevention Research Centers Program, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, under cooperative agreement #U48DP006413

Land Acknowledgement CAB adaptation :

Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and acknowledgment are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference. We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. The native communities around Tucson number over 30,000 strong and are descended from many tribes and native communities. We are gathered on the ancestral unoccupied land of the Tohono O'odham, Pascua Yaqui and many more who may call this place home. We pay respects to the elders past and present, please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration and settlement that bring us together here today.