

ARIZONA PRC

Championing Community Health Worker Effectiveness in Arizona and Beyond

1 **Dissemination**

- More to add to the list; the AzPRC team shares the two latest peer-reviewed publications

2 **State wide**

- Celebrating our dedicated partners, fostering collaboration for a healthier, more resilient Arizona together

3 **Center news**

- AzPRC's general highlights
- Highlighting the new project
- AzPRC umbrella updates

From UNIDOS to TAG: Celebrating Milestones and Launching New Collaborations!

Inside: Celebrating a season of success with multiple awards and highlighting our impactful community partnerships!

And the Award Goes To...

Celebrating the outstanding achievements of our center's brightest stars and leaders.



Image generated using Midjourney AI (Prompt- Arizona PRC community award highlight, blurry background)



Editor's Letter

Looking Ahead: Celebrating Achievements and Launching New Initiatives



I am excited to share with you the latest updates from our center as we conclude one chapter and begin an exciting new journey.

This fall, we are in the final stages of winding down the UNIDOS core research project. UNIDOS has been a vital initiative, and its outcomes have significantly contributed to improving public health in our communities. We are incredibly grateful for the dedication and collaboration that made this project such a success.

As we bring UNIDOS to a close, we are thrilled to announce the launch of our new initiative, TAG (Together Across Generations). This five-year program will focus on fostering intergenerational connections, with the goal of reducing social isolation and loneliness—critical issues in today's society. By bridging generations, we aim to strengthen community ties and enhance overall well-being across all age groups. We are eager to see the positive impact this program will have, and I'm confident it will pave the way for meaningful, long-term change.

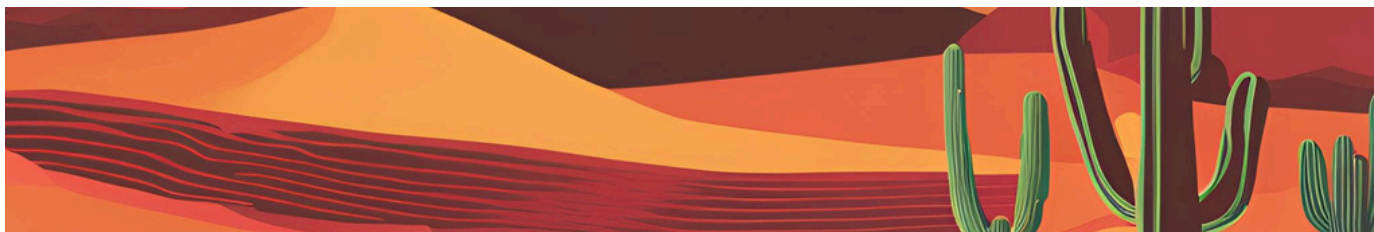
More information and a full program summary of TAG will be available soon on our website, where you can follow the development and progress of this exciting initiative.

Our Community Action Board (CAB) continues to be a driving force behind these efforts, and we are grateful for their support in developing TAG. Their input has been instrumental in shaping the program, ensuring it remains community-centered and effective in addressing the pressing issues we face.

In this edition, we are proud to highlight the many well-deserved awards and accomplishments of our team, along with exciting updates from our ongoing projects. We hope you enjoy reading about all the great work happening at our center!

Wishing you a thoughtful and inspiring read!





New Publication Spotlight: A Community-Based Participatory Approach in Applying the Sociocultural Resilience Model in U.S.–Mexico Border Communities

Maia Ingram, Ada M. Wilkinson-Lee, Namoonga M. Mantina, Maria Velasco, Gloria Coronado, Mark Gallegos, Scott C. Carvajal

This study, conducted in U.S.–Mexico border communities, applies the Sociocultural Resilience Model (SRM) through a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach. The SRM suggests that cultural and social processes contribute to the health advantages of Latinx populations, particularly those of Mexican origin. Academic researchers collaborated with a community action board to integrate local experiences into the SRM, adapting it for a community-clinical linkages intervention. Through participatory workshops, partners defined key cultural concepts like intergenerational storytelling and shared food, emphasizing the importance of border identity and bicultural dynamics. This collaboration resulted in a tailored intervention that incorporated community-specific measures and cultural nuances. The study highlights the effectiveness of CBPR in ensuring health behavior models are grounded in community realities, fostering resilience, and improving health outcomes. This approach exemplifies how community and academic partnerships can adapt theoretical models for practical health interventions. [Read the full article here.](#)



Featured Article: Risk factors associated with loneliness among Mexican-origin adults in southern Arizona

Mario Morales, Ada M. Wilkinson-Lee, Maia Ingram, Thomas Nuño, Jill E. Guernsey De Zapien, Ramses Sepulveda & Scott Carvajal

This study investigates factors related to loneliness among 213 mostly Mexican-origin adults in Southern Arizona at risk of chronic diseases. Using community-based participatory research data, researchers examined the relationship between loneliness, social support, hope, and physical problems. Results showed that increased social support and hope were associated with decreased loneliness, but their combined effect unexpectedly increased loneliness. Physical problem severity was also linked to higher loneliness levels. Additionally, older age and being born in Mexico with less than 30 years in the U.S. showed protective effects against loneliness. These findings highlight the importance of fostering supportive environments for Mexican-origin adults to enhance community bonds and overall well-being in the U.S.-Mexico border region.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Campesinos Sin Frontera Leadership: A Valued Partner in Our Community & the AzPRC CAB

“We Are Very Fortunate To Have Each Other:” Two Former Farmworkers Reflect On Their Journey Together

Emma Torres Co-founder and Executive Director of Campesinos Sin Fronteras
Rogelio Torres Behavioral Health Programming Campesinos Sin Fronteras

Emma Torres and her husband Rogelio both grew up in migrant farmworker families. Emma’s family worked picking strawberries and cutting lettuce, while Rogelio’s family focused on citrus fruits, such as oranges and limes.

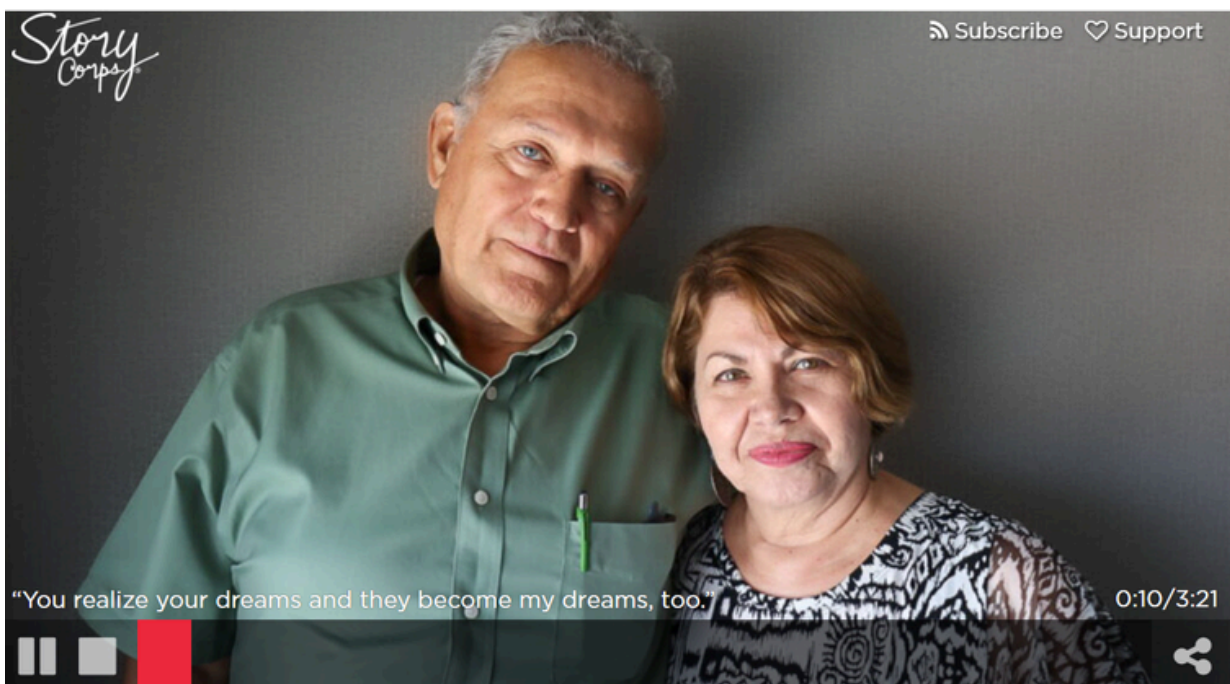
They met in the 1980s near Yuma, Arizona, after a mutual friend introduced them. But love was the last thing on their minds. Emma reached out to Rogelio because she was moving and needed a pickup truck, and he had access to one.

More than 40 years after that event, they came to StoryCorps to talk about their unlikely love for each other, and how they found their purpose in life helping fellow farmworkers at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Bottom Photo: Rogelio and Emma Torres at their StoryCorps interview in Yuma, AZ on July 24, 2024. By Jo Corona for StoryCorps.

This broadcast is supported in part by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Originally aired September 20, 2024 on NPR’s Morning Edition.
[Original story link here.](#)



1.



Outstanding Achievement in Rural Women's Health Award

Patty Molina, Senior Director of Community Health Services, attended the 2024 Rural Women's Health Symposium in Flagstaff, Arizona, on June 13-14, 2024. The event brought together public health professionals, community members, and stakeholders to celebrate and advance efforts supporting women's health in rural Arizona.

Patty was honored to be nominated for the Outstanding Achievement in Rural Women's Health Award by three of her colleagues. This recognition highlights her commitment and contributions to enhancing health and wellness for women in rural communities.

The symposium provided an excellent platform for sharing best practices, networking, and discussing innovative strategies to address the unique challenges faced by women in these areas. Patty's participation not only underscores her leadership but also emphasizes the importance of collaboration in achieving optimal health outcomes for women throughout Arizona.

2.



3.

A promotional flyer for the 2024 Rural Women's Health Symposium. The top half features a scenic landscape of mountains and trees with yellow autumn foliage. A large blue shape contains the text "2024 Rural Women's Health Symposium" and the tagline "Striving for Equity to Cultivate Women's Health in Rural Communities". Below this, the dates "June 13-14" and the venue "DoubleTree by Hilton Flagstaff" are listed. At the bottom, there are logos for the Arizona Rural Women's Health Network and the Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers, along with a "SAVE THE DATE" banner.

1. Patty Molina presenting
2. Patty Molina posing with her award
3. rural women's health advertisement flyer/poster

1.



AzCHOW Recognized as Health Equity Champion at National Event

The Arizona Community Health Workers Association (AzCHOW) has been honored as a 2024 Health Equity Champion by the Equality Health Foundation at the inaugural Rhythm of Well-Being Community Concert & Honors Celebration. Under the leadership of CEO and Co-Founder Floribella Redondo, AzCHOW was recognized for its pioneering work in integrating health equity principles into the training and education of culturally diverse community health workers (CHWs). This prestigious award highlights the organization's dedication to breaking down educational barriers and addressing health disparities across Arizona.

Through strategic partnerships and innovative outreach, AzCHOW strengthens the CHW workforce to better serve communities statewide, ensuring equitable access to care for all. This recognition underscores the importance of community-driven solutions in achieving health equity.

For a comprehensive review of the event visit the following webpage:

<https://www.prweb.com/releases/equality-health-foundation-announces-health-equity-champions-at-the-rhythm-of-well-being-community-concert--honors-celebration-302244041.html>

2.



3.



1. Equality Health Logo
2. Floribella in the field teaching CHW core competencies
3. Rhythm of well-being banner



mercy care

Floribella Redondo-Martinez: Mercy Care's Champion of Health Equity

Floribella Redondo-Martinez, a dedicated advocate and community health worker, has been honored with the Advocacy Award at the Mercy Honors for her profound impact on health equity in Arizona. With over 30 years of experience as a promotora de salud and two decades working as a migratory farmworker in Yuma, Floribella has a unique perspective on the challenges facing under-resourced communities. She has tirelessly sought resources to address the health disparities affecting farmworkers and has been instrumental in creating a community health worker workforce that advocates for the rights of marginalized populations. Her commitment to empowering others and raising awareness about health inequities reflects her unwavering dedication to fostering a healthier and more equitable society. Floribella's remarkable efforts exemplify the spirit of the RISE Awards, promoting resilience, innovation, service, and empowerment in the pursuit of better health for all.

The entire AzPRC sends Floribella a huge congratulations for this great achievement!

<https://www.mercycareaz.org/mercy-honors.html>

2.



3.



1. Mercy Care Logo
2. Award presented to Floribella
3. Floribella receiving the award

PRC Success Story

The Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC) partnered with the Yuma County Public Health Services District (YCPHSD) to launch Yuma CONÉCTATE, a local initiative designed to help community members access essential services such as housing, healthcare, and employment support. This two-page PDF highlights how the CONÉCTATE program addresses social determinants of health, specifically for those impacted by COVID-19, and demonstrates the power of collaboration between local health departments and research institutions to meet community needs. To view, download, and share the [PDF](#), [click the image below](#).

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER



Yuma CONÉCTATE: Addressing Social Determinants of Health in Arizona



CONÉCTATE Community Health Workers at a community event.

Yuma CONÉCTATE ("connect" in Spanish), is a local initiative of the Yuma County Public Health Services District (YCPHSD) that helps community members who were negatively impacted by COVID-19 access essential services like housing, health care, and employment support. YCPHSD developed CONÉCTATE by adapting a program from the [University of Arizona Prevention Research Center](#) (AzPRC). CONÉCTATE addresses critical social determinants of health and shows how local health departments can work with researchers to improve community health and meet community needs.

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HEALTH SERVICES

County health departments in Arizona provide various services aimed at tackling social determinants of health, but these efforts are often disconnected, even within individual counties and health departments. This makes it hard for people to find and use essential services such as housing, job assistance, education, health care, and mental health support. It's especially tough for people at risk for chronic diseases, who may already have physical and emotional problems. Complex health problems, isolation, and lack of tailored support intensify these challenges. In addition, people with unpredictable and demanding job schedules, like farmworkers, face extra hurdles due to the limited clinic hours and long waiting times for medical resources.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic worsened these issues, showing the clear need for easy-to-access health services and support.



Yuma County Public Health Services District showing the CONÉCTATE CHWs at work.

COLLABORATION AND ADAPTATION: BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY

The AzPRC research projects, [LINKS](#) and [UNIDOS](#) (2014–2024), are programs led by community health workers (CHWs) that connect people of Mexican origin living in the US-Mexico border region with essential services. YCPHSD was a research partner with AzPRC on these projects. In 2021, YCPHSD adapted the LINKS/UNIDOS program as CONÉCTATE with the help of the AzPRC Participatory Evaluation Institute (PEI). YCPHSD worked with the PEI to build internal



ECTS
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ember 2024

Celebrating Dr. Ada Wilkinson-Lee: Recipient of the Outstanding Public Scholar Award and 2024 Women of Impact Honor



Dr. Ada Wilkinson-Lee, an Associate Professor in the Department of Mexican American Studies at the University of Arizona and Co-PI of the AzPRC core research project, has been recognized for her exceptional contributions to public scholarship and community health through two prestigious awards: the Outstanding Public Scholar Award and the 2024 Women of Impact honor.

The **Outstanding Public Scholar Award** acknowledges faculty members engaged in diverse forms of public scholarship, emphasizing outreach and collaborative efforts with community organizations. Dr. Wilkinson-Lee is a leading expert in community-based participatory research (CBPR), focusing on Latino health and health disparities in border communities. Her work has exemplified the importance of building trust and long-term relationships with community members and organizations. As part of her commitment, she holds leadership roles in several initiatives, including the Arizona REACH Coalition Network and the Arizona Association of Community Health Centers. Her scholarship emphasizes the vital contributions of community health workers, known as “promotoras,” in engaging local populations and ensuring culturally appropriate public health interventions.

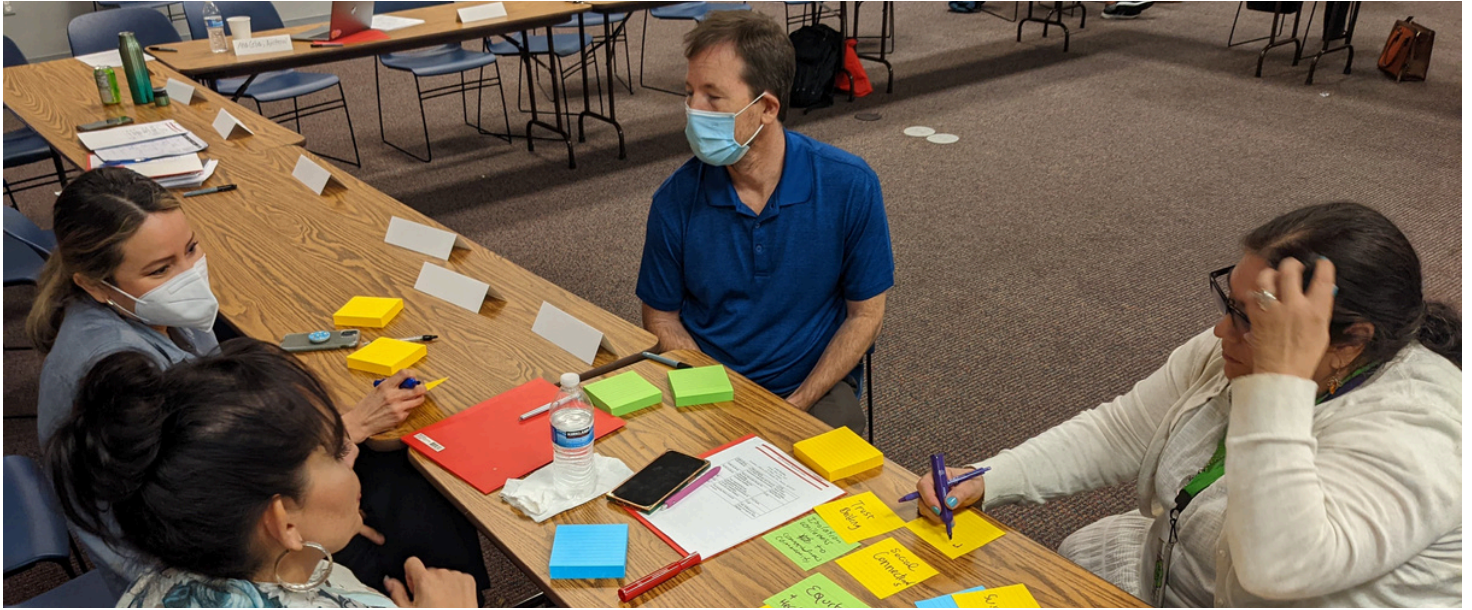
4.

In addition to this honor, Dr. Wilkinson-Lee was recognized as a **2024 Woman of Impact**, a campaign led by the Office of Research, Innovation & Impact (RII) at the University of Arizona. This recognition highlights her unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, particularly within underserved border communities. Dr. Wilkinson-Lee’s dedication to mentoring graduate students and involving them in her research projects further emphasizes her role in empowering the next generation of scholars.

Dr. Wilkinson-Lee's remarkable achievements reflect her dedication to improving health outcomes and fostering equity within Southern Arizona. Her dual recognition showcases not only her scholarly excellence but also her profound impact on the communities she serves and her commitment to advancing the mission of the University of Arizona.

Sneak Peek: The New AzPRC Core Research Project

U of A project addresses loneliness in older adults living in border and rural communities



The Together Across Generations (TAG) project is an initiative led by the Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC) that addresses the pressing issue of loneliness and social isolation among older adults living in rural, border, and tribal communities across Arizona. TAG is the new core research project being funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) over the next five years, TAG seeks to implement, translate, and disseminate evidence-based strategies that promote intergenerational connections and enhance the overall well-being of these underserved populations.

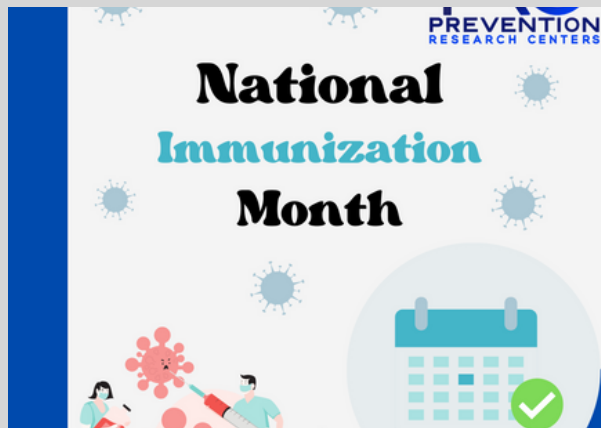
TAG focuses on three rural Arizona counties—Yuma, Santa Cruz, and Cochise—as well as the Hualapai Tribe, collaborating with local organizations to amplify existing programs aimed at combating loneliness. These initiatives often involve intergenerational activities where local youth teach technology skills to older adults, enabling them to maintain virtual connections with family and friends. In return, the elders share their cultural and traditional knowledge, fostering a reciprocal relationship that strengthens community bonds. By enhancing and expanding these programs, TAG aims to reduce social isolation and create a more connected community fabric.

At the heart of TAG's approach is community-based participatory research, which emphasizes collaboration with community members to tailor interventions to their specific needs. This process ensures that the solutions developed are not only effective but also culturally relevant and sustainable. The project will engage community health workers, known as promotoras, who are integral to the implementation of TAG. These individuals serve as trusted links between health care providers and community members, bringing invaluable local knowledge and insights to the project.

A community action board, comprising about ten community health workers, will play a critical role in guiding the TAG initiative. This board will provide advice on community needs, helping to steer the project in a direction that aligns with the goals and aspirations of the local populations.

In addition to fostering intergenerational connections, TAG will launch a statewide awareness campaign to highlight the importance of addressing loneliness and social isolation. Through data collection and partnerships with local agencies, the project aims to develop a comprehensive plan that not only raises awareness but also encourages the adoption of effective interventions tailored to the unique challenges faced by rural, border, and tribal communities. Overall, TAG represents a significant step toward building healthier, more resilient communities across Arizona.

As part of Dr. Wilkinson-Lee's Women of Impact initiative, this story has been highlighted on the University of Arizona news webpage. [To read more, click on this link.](#)



AzPRC Coalitions

The Arizona-Sonora Binational Network for Healthy Communities will host a signing ceremony on Friday, November 15th, 2024, from 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM at the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional - Plantel Nogales (view location [here](#)).

This ceremony will recognize the network's official formation and highlight its commitment to enhancing collaboration among academic institutions and community-based organizations in Arizona and Sonora (Mexico). The event will be followed by a discussion on the future of the network, focusing on its overall purpose, specific themes of interest, types of activities, and potential resources for support.

This initiative represents a vital step in building healthier communities across the Arizona-Sonora region. The signing ceremony will serve as a platform for fostering connections and promoting collective efforts aimed at addressing community health challenges. We look forward to sharing insights and ideas that will shape the future of this important network.

For more information on the Arizona-Sonora Binational Network for Healthy Communities, please contact dezapien@arizona.edu.



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.

August Social Media Efforts

August is National Immunization Awareness Month, a time to stay informed about vaccines and protect yourself and others. You can find valuable resources and updates, including hashtags like #PRCnetwork and #Ivax2Protect, to promote immunization efforts. Stay safe this summer with tips to prevent heat-related illnesses and protect your skin in the sun with free sunscreen dispensers provided by Harvard PRC and IMPACT Melanoma. Lastly, celebrate National Community Health Worker Week by learning more about the coalition working towards voluntary certification for Community Health Workers through the University of Arizona PRC.

September Social Media Efforts

Over the past five years, the Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) have demonstrated a remarkable commitment to advancing public health. Across various communities, the PRCs have worked tirelessly to combat health disparities, promote wellness, and empower individuals through research-driven interventions. Their efforts have spanned areas such as chronic disease prevention, mental health, community engagement, and tailored public health programs. These centers have addressed critical issues, including health equity, nutrition, physical activity, and disease prevention, contributing to healthier futures for underserved populations. This cycle has truly showcased the PRCs' unwavering dedication to transforming lives and building healthier communities nationwide.

Thank you to all the PRC "superheroes" for all your hard work & dedication!

CAB Community Action Board

The Community *Action* Board of the AzPRC continued its ongoing efforts, and met quarterly this year. As of 2023 two new Co-Chairs have been welcomed to the leadership circle. Maria Chavoya and Patty Molina are longtime members who are leading the 2023 charge. Below is a list of newsletter contributors.

Issue Contributors:

Campeños Sin Fronteras

Arizona Community Health
Worker Association
(AzCHOW)

Arizona Department of
Health Services

Center for Disease Control
and Prevention PRC
Communication
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Arizona Prevention Research
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Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention, under
cooperative agreement
#U48DP006413*

Land Acknowledgement:

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.