

ARIZONA PRC

Championing Community Health Worker Effectiveness in Arizona and Beyond

A

Dissemination

• Reflect on APHA highlights as the research team invites you to revisit shared insights and contributions

B

State wide

• Showcasing subaward recipients across Arizona, reflecting on Year 1 experiences and perspectives together

C

Center news

• Learn about PEAR: the center housing PRC and supporting community-engaged research efforts

Spotlight on PRC Research: Advancing TAG Through Progress, Partnerships, and Impact

Inside: Reflecting on the first year of TAG impact through shared insights, achievements, and statewide community perspectives..



ARIZONA PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER
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MEL & ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
 PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION & ACTION RESEARCH CENTER





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Participatory Evaluation & Action Research Center



SEAHEC

Southeast Arizona Health
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Together Across Generations: Reflections from Year One of the TAG Project



This edition of the Arizona Prevention Research Center newsletter reflects on the first year of our core research project, Together Across Generations (TAG). Year one focused on building a strong foundation rooted in relationships, shared learning, and community-driven leadership across Arizona. This issue centers the voices of our TAG subaward recipients—Hualapai Elder Services, Mariposa Community Health Center, Campesinos Sin Fronteras, and the Southeast Arizona Area Health Education Center (SEAHEC). Each partner shares reflections on their Year 1 experiences in their own words, highlighting local context, priorities, and approaches to intergenerational engagement. Together, these perspectives reflect the collective strength of the TAG partnership.

Throughout the first year, partners engaged in planning, relationship-building, and community engagement that laid the groundwork for addressing social isolation and loneliness among older adults through intergenerational connection. These reflections underscore a shared commitment to participatory research, cultural relevance, and sustained collaboration.

As TAG continues to grow, we are grateful for the foundation established in this first year and for the partnerships that make this work possible. We invite you to read and celebrate the perspectives shared in this issue as a testament to the power of community-led research across generations.

Thank you to our TAG partners for their continued dedication and leadership.

Ramses Sepulveda
Deputy Director
Arizona Prevention Research Center



Co-PI Reflections: Leading With Intention and Collaboration — From Dr. Ada Wilkinson-Lee



As we look back at year 1 of the Together Across Generations (TAG) Project, we are truly grateful for our community partners. Our community partners' commitment to their respective communities sustained and kept us focused on our shared goals. Although at the national level, our project's future was at times uncertain, our partnerships never wavered and continued the work. Our center was fortunate to be able to build upon the long-standing Community Action Board's passion to move forward with the health and well-being of Arizona communities' health agenda, regardless of the challenges we faced this year. It is a testament to the resilience of our partners' commitment to the work they do everyday and we look forward to our collaborative work in 2026!

Learning Together: Insights from TAG Research Committee Co-Chairs

Author: Andi Medrano AzPRC Research Manager, Lizzie Garcia Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Manager MCHC



Serving as Co-Chairs of the TAG program has been a meaningful and rewarding experience. This experience has reaffirmed the value of shared leadership, patience, adaptability, and intentional collaboration.

Our partnership has been one of the strongest aspects of the TAG program. From the beginning, we brought diverse perspectives, skills, and lived experiences to the table, which enriched discussions and decision-making. As the year progressed, we recognized the need to adapt and find more effective ways to hold meetings to ensure all partners could actively participate and that every voice was heard. By adjusting meeting formats, creating space for open dialogue, and being mindful of differing communication styles and schedules, we have seen stronger engagement and collaboration.

The first year of TAG was focused primarily on planning, learning, and relationship-building. During this phase, we worked together to identify priorities, select and develop surveys, and better understand the scope of senior isolation in our community. While this stage required significant time and coordination, it was essential in establishing a strong framework for future implementation. This year of planning allowed us to be intentional, data-informed, and community-centered.

Overall, the first year of TAG has demonstrated the importance of flexibility, collaboration, and preparation in community-based initiatives. As Co-Chairs we are proud of the groundwork we have laid and confident that the relationships, insights, and structures developed during this planning year will support meaningful impact in the years ahead.

What we learned from each other as co-chairs:

Lizzie: I benefited greatly from working alongside my Co-Chair, Andi, especially the value of patience and allowing processes to develop over time. Being part of this process has strengthened my understanding of how thoughtful planning lays the foundation for sustainable and impactful outcomes.

Andi: As a research committee co-chair for the TAG project, it has been an amazing opportunity to work alongside my fellow co-chair, Lizzie Garcia. Our different working and facilitation styles have been a great asset to our co-chair partnership as we've learned by complementing each other's styles. Our focus on intentionally reflecting on CBPR principles like shared leadership and decision-making has been an incredible way to learn the day-to-day of CBPR principles.

TAG Takes the APHA Stage: Elevating Collaborative Work in Nogales Arizona

Building Bridges in Nogales, Arizona: Cross-Sector Collaboration to Address Social Isolation and Health Among Older Adults

Author: Brenda Sanchez Executive Director Southeast Arizona Health Education Center



This fall, the Together Across Generations (TAG) team had the opportunity to present at the American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting & Expo in Washington, DC, as part of a lightning session focused on strategies to address social isolation and loneliness among older adults.

Our presentation, *Building Bridges in Nogales, Arizona: Cross-Sector Collaboration to Address Social Isolation and Health Among Older Adults*, highlighted the unique challenges faced by older adults in rural border communities, such as social isolation, chronic disease, and limited access to culturally and linguistically appropriate care and the importance of cross-sector collaboration in addressing these issues.

During the lightning round, Brenda Sanchez, Executive Director of SEAHEC, presented on behalf of the TAG partnership, sharing how the initiative brings together Southeast Arizona Health Education Center, Mariposa Community Health Center, and the University of Arizona Prevention Research Center (UA PRC). The presentation focused on TAG's intergenerational model, which centers Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Teen Health Facilitators to deliver culturally relevant health education, promote social connection, and link older adults to preventive care and community resources.

A highlight of the session was that the entire TAG team representing PRC, SEAHEC, and Mariposa was present in the audience to support the presentation and help respond to questions during the lightning round discussion. This strong team presence reflected the collaborative nature of the work and allowed for rich dialogue with attendees interested in implementation, partnerships, and community engagement.

The session was well attended, with a full room of public health professionals and organizations from across the country presenting on innovative senior health initiatives. Participating in this session reinforced the growing national recognition of social isolation as a public health priority and underscored the critical need for community-based, CHW-led, and intergenerational programs like TAG.

Sharing Nogales' story on a national stage was both affirming and motivating. It highlighted not only the impact of TAG, but also the importance of continued investment in collaborative, community-driven approaches to support healthy aging in rural and border communities.

Celebrating Growth and Connection: Entre Nosotros (Between Us) Curriculum Concludes with Heartfelt Ceremony

Author: Lupita Gonzales Southeast Arizona Health Education Center (SEAHEC)



Pictured above are participants of SEAHEC programming

The “Entre Nosotros/ Between us Curriculum,” is a wellness program focused on increasing mental health awareness in rural border communities in Southern Arizona. SEAHEC CHWs developed and led lessons aimed to increase mental health awareness, decrease stigma around mental/behavioral health, and connect seniors to existing services. Supported by the University of Arizona Participatory Evaluation and Action Research (PEAR) Center to enhance evaluation and program growth.

curriculum recently concluded its first series at the Restorative Center of Circles of Peace, wrapping up six transformative weeks of education, connection, and personal growth. To kick off the closing ceremony, we set a joyful tone with a lively Just Dance activity that had everyone moving and smiling.

Following the energizing start, the SEAHEC team offered a comprehensive recap of the program, revisiting key topics and moments. Nora Guzman from the UA Primary Prevention Mobile Health Unit joined us to highlight additional resources and information participants engaged with throughout the sessions.

A highlight of the event was the testimonial portion⁴, where participants courageously shared their personal experiences. Their reflections revealed how impactful the curriculum had been—many expressed deep gratitude for the space to learn, grow, and feel heard. Several attendees were so inspired that they expressed interest in continuing with future sessions or attending additional workshops.

To keep the energy high, the event featured raffles and an interactive Kahoot game that reviewed major topics from the curriculum. The celebration concluded with the presentation of certificates of participation, along with cups, snacks, and raffle prizes as tokens of appreciation for our attendees.

We’re proud to share that the Entre Nosotros curriculum also launched at two additional community centers (featured on the following page.)

Nogales Senior Center

Community health workers, representing SEAHEC, visited the Nogales Senior Center to deliver the first *Entre Nosotros* session, focused on promoting mental health among older adults. A total of 19 individuals attended, including men and women. The session explored essential topics such as the definition of mental health and well-being, the most common causes of mental health decline among seniors—including social isolation, loss of loved ones, chronic illness, and limited access to services—as well as the differences between stress and anxiety.

Participants engaged deeply with the material, asking thoughtful questions and sharing personal stories. The session fostered a safe and open space for dialogue. It concluded with a breathing exercise, a discussion on managing anxiety, and simple, practical tips for maintaining mental health—such as staying active, nurturing social connections, seeking support, and maintaining good sleep and nutrition habits.

Rio Rico Community Center

At the Rio Rico Community Center, the first session centered on Mental Health & Stress. After their regular yoga class, participants joined a meaningful discussion on recognizing signs of stress, understanding mental health, and adopting healthy coping strategies. The session encouraged open conversation, self-reflection, and shared useful tools for emotional well-being.

One story that particularly moved us came from a participant at the Restorative Center. Initially quiet and hesitant, she was encouraged by her daughter to attend. Over time, her confidence blossomed—she began arriving early, actively participating, and eventually shared personal reflections during our final gathering. Her family noticed a meaningful shift in her outlook and energy, and she credited *Entre Nosotros* for the positive transformation.

As we reflect on this successful launch, we are humbled by the stories of growth and connection that emerged. We look forward to expanding the *Entre Nosotros* curriculum and continuing to support emotional well-being across our communities.



Building Connection Across Generations: The TAG Project at Mariposa

Author: Alexa Lopez Mariposa Community Health Center

Highlighting intergenerational programming through a long-standing community partnership.



Pictured above is the 4th annual “senior Cares” event promoting intergenerational connection

Mariposa Community Health Center is a one-stop shop for healthcare needs in the rural communities within Santa Cruz County. MCHC offers a variety of health education programs through the Community Health Services department using a Community Health Worker model. CHS programs serve the community at large, hosting programs for children, teens, and adults to promote healthy living and address the health issues related to Social Determinants of Health within the county.

Adult programs focus on health promotion and disease prevention, with curricula focused on diabetes, high blood pressure, or nutrition, while youth programs focus on risky behavior prevention, community engagement, and leadership development.

Older adults in the county often participate in CHS programs, and youth have engaged seniors through intergenerational activities in the past, but there is still a need to address the unique issues they face.

Through different partnerships with local agencies, MCHC has expanded their CHS programs to reach more seniors and connect them to services- things like arts and crafts activities, social events, and even a Senior Conference hosted alongside SEAHEC and Circles of Peace.

The longstanding partnership with the UAPRC⁴ has introduced the TAG program to address the issue of social isolation and loneliness in older adults. MCHC is part of the research committee, with Lizzie Garcia, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Manager, acting as co-chair for the committee alongside Andi Medrano, Core Research Manager, AZPRC/ UofA. Through the past year, the committee has been meeting regularly and is highly involved in the planning process of the study- from initial conversations about the study and what SIL is, to continued review of materials to be used during the study and plans for implementation in the subsequent years.

Overall, MCHC provides a multitude of services for older adults, and through the years, we have seen that the connection between teens and seniors is strong. With the TAG Project MCHC will continue to provide these services and measure the true impact these activities have on older adults.

YEAR 1 UPDATE

The latest news and updates from Hualapai Senior Services Center



Hualapai Youth Council - Brannon Whatoname, Gabby Whatoname, Joaquin Arrez, and Delaney & Antonique Cogburn contribute their services handing out popcorn, soda, pigs n' blanket, and chocolate candy to our movie-goers.

Movie Night Brings Youth and Elders Together!

By Antonia Cogburn, CHW/Activities Coordinator

Our recent movie night was a wonderful success, bringing together community members of all ages to enjoy the animated action film, K-POP Demon Hunters. It was a fun evening full of laughter, connection, and shared excitement!

In attendance:

- 🧓 Elders (55+): 4
- 👨‍👩‍👧 Adults: 6
- 🧒 Youth (ages 8–17): 13



Everyone really enjoyed the movie, and it was great to see so much positive interaction between the generations. Youth Council member Gabby Whatoname mentioned that one of the elders is hoping for a western movie next time — and we agree, that sounds like a great idea!



We're already starting to plan our next intergenerational movie night, and we're aiming for something in the western genre next month. Stay tuned for details — we'd love to see even more community members join us!

Diamond Creek Trip - Bridging Generations Through Culture & Connection

By Antonia Cogburn, CHW/Activities Coordinator

The recent trip to Diamond Creek was a meaningful collaboration between the Senior Services Center and Cultural Resources, bringing together our youth and elders for a day of connection, culture, and shared stories.

In attendance:

- 👴 Elders (55+): 5
- 👤 Adults: 8
- 👧 Youth (ages 8–17): 6

Cultural Staff in attendance included Loveena Watahomigie, Sterling Selana, and Paula Walker, who helped guide the group and share cultural knowledge throughout the day.

Once we arrived at the bottom of the canyon, we unloaded snacks and lunch—everyone was ready to eat after the drive! We sat in small groups, talking and getting comfortable. I, Antonia, got things started by introducing our center and explaining what the TAG (Together As Generations) program is all about—bringing youth and elders together through events and shared experiences that help bridge the generational gap.

The Youth Council and Youth Advisor Paula introduced themselves next, followed by Loveena and Sterling, who shared how he began his journey as a bird singer. Rachel “Berry” Manakaja also introduced herself and spoke about the importance of genealogy, encouraging everyone to attend genealogy sessions with Cody to learn more about family connections within our community.

Everyone took a moment to introduce themselves, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. One particularly moving moment came when an elder opened up emotionally, sharing about the deep loss of her two oldest daughters and her oldest granddaughter. It was a powerful reminder of the importance of these intergenerational gatherings, where sharing and healing can take place.

Despite the river being too cold to jump in and splash around, the day was filled with laughter, good food, meaningful conversations, and beautiful memories. We’re grateful to everyone who helped make this trip possible and look forward to more opportunities to connect youth and elders in the future.

With gratitude,
The UofA TAG Program Team
Senior Services Center & Cultural Resources



Breast Cancer Awareness Month Walk

By Antonia Cogburn, CHW/Activities Coordinator

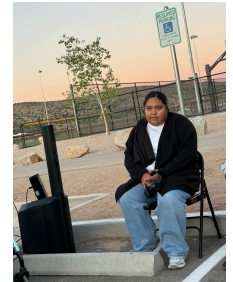
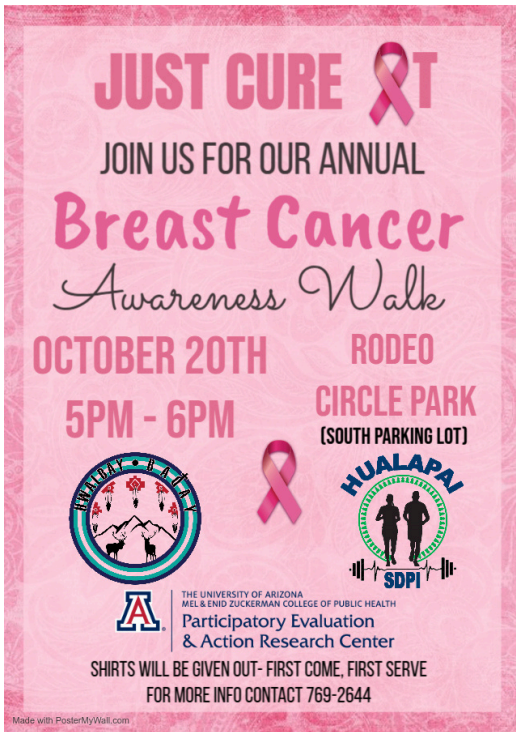
In honor of **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**, our program teamed up with the **Hualapai SDPI Program** to host an evening walk dedicated to health, hope, and community.

We were so happy to see such a great turnout – from our elders to our youngest youth – all coming together to support this important cause. Everyone who participated received a t-shirt and enjoyed a healthy snack after completing the walk.

It was a beautiful evening filled with laughter, encouragement, and togetherness. Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make this event so meaningful!

Let’s continue to spread awareness and encourage our loved ones to stay proactive about their health – early detection can save lives.

With gratitude,
The UofA TAG Program Team
Senior Services Center & Cultural Resources



TOGETHER ACROSS GENERATIONS



Newsletter

INTERGENERATIONAL IMPACT

We are deeply committed to engaging with our community, creating welcoming spaces where older adults can connect, stay active, and access valuable resources. At CSF, we recognize the importance of educating and supporting seniors to enhance their well-being and sense of belonging.

Our ongoing Support Groups offer free sessions tailored to the needs of local seniors.

These gatherings feature interactive discussions, guest speakers, and presentations that provide practical information about community resources and important issues affecting them.

Through our long-standing relationships and trusted presence in the community, CSF is well-positioned to strengthen outreach and recruitment efforts for the Together Across Generations Project in Year 2.

↓ In this newsletter you will find:

TAG Year 1 Latest projects, resources given, and more.

TOGETHER ACROSS GENERATIONS

Campesinos Peer Program YOUTH COMPONENT

At Campesinos Sin Fronteras (CSF), our Youth & Families Department works hand in hand with a vibrant group of young leaders, ages 12 to 18. Together, they form a strong youth component dedicated to developing creative strategies that uplift and strengthen our community. Even before the launch of the Together Across Generations (TAG) project, these youth showed genuine enthusiasm and commitment to getting involved. Their passion and initiative reflect their deep desire to make a difference. As we move forward, we're excited to invite these inspiring young people to play an active role in evaluating and bridging the gap between generations—helping to create meaningful connections and lasting impact in our community.



CSF Peer Group at Viva Youth 18 Leadership Conference, awarded 1st place for their presentation.



Listening Session on Social Isolation by UofA

Community Health Workers

Thank you to the University of Arizona for hosting a listening session on Social Isolation for our CHWs. Our CHWs are well aware of social isolation in our community and are excited to do more and lend a helping hand through the Together Across Generations Project.

As we begin the second year of TAG, our collaboration with CSF promotoras continues to grow stronger. Through ongoing trainings, shared insights, and idea exchanges, the promotoras play a vital role in shaping and enhancing the program's impact.

In addition to their work within TAG, the CSF promotoras participate in community workshops and attend invitations from partner agencies to support and assist more seniors in the community. Their dedication and leadership continue to inspire meaningful connections and lasting change.

TOGETHER ACROSS GENERATIONS

Digital Story Telling

TAG COLLABORATING EFFORTS

All year long, we've teamed up with a Digital Story Creator to document the special moments from our intergenerational activities. These stories help us preserve memories and see how the project evolves from start to finish.



Youth participants from a partner school visit the Senior Center to demonstrate kindness and listen to elderly advice.

We're deeply grateful for the Together Across Generations (TAG) project and excited for the upcoming implementation year. Bringing generations together to learn, share, and connect is truly inspiring, and we can't wait to see the positive impact it will have in our community.

Announcing the Participatory Evaluation and Action Research (PEAR) Center

We are excited to announce the launch of the Participatory Evaluation and Action Research (PEAR) Center, an ABOR-recognized center housed within the University of Arizona College of Public Health. The PEAR Center was established to strengthen and expand participatory, community-engaged research and evaluation efforts that center community voices and advance public health prevention across Arizona and beyond.

As part of this transition, the Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC) is now housed within the PEAR Center. This change reflects the depth, reach, and impact of the AzPRC's work and is not a shift away from it. The AzPRC's history, mission, partnerships, and prevention-focused efforts remain steadfast. Its legacy of community-driven prevention research continues, now supported within a center that more fully represents the scale and significance of its contributions across the state.

The PEAR Center partners with organizations at the local, state, tribal, and national levels to center community expertise and promote public health prevention. Guided by the same Community Action Board, PEAR collaborates with partners on research, assessment, and mutual capacity-building initiatives that address health inequities, inform policy, and support meaningful social change.

PEAR's work is grounded in its core elements:

- **Participatory:** a philosophy and practice that promotes collaborative and equitable engagement in efforts supporting positive social change
- **Evaluation:** the use of data and partner-led strategies to inform and improve practice
- **Action:** taking concrete steps to change practices, policies, and conditions
- **Research:** the creation and sharing of knowledge to help us better understand, respond, and build a healthier world

As a core program within the PEAR Center, the AzPRC represents a strengthened and unified infrastructure for participatory prevention research and evaluation. This structure honors a strong legacy while positioning the work for continued innovation, partnership, and impact across Arizona.



CAB Community Action Board

The Community *Action* Board of the PEAR continued its ongoing efforts, and met quarterly this year. As of 2026 two new Co-Chairs have been welcomed to the leadership circle. Arturo Luna and Lupita Gonzales are longtime members who are leading the 2026 charge. Below is a list of newsletter contributors.

Issue Contributors:

- Campeños Sin Fronteras
- Arizona Community Health Worker Association (AzCHOW) (Razchow)
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention PRC Communication Committee
- University of Arizona's Mexican-American Studies Department
- Mariposa Community Health Center
- Participatory Evaluation Institute
- El Rio Community Health Center
- Arizona Complete Health
- SEAHEC (Southeast Arizona Health Education Center)
- Hualapai Senior Services Center

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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.

