Women, Voices, Healing

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Tewa Women United

Welcome to Tewa Homelands

Tewa Spheres of Influence
Securing Sacred Space

Space becomes sacred...
When it honors those who came before us and provides safe harbor today.
When it reminds us of larger realities and leads us to inner truths.
When it cradles the musician’s prayer and the poet’s melody, lifting our hearts.
When being there proves healing, nourishing and satisfying.

Sacred space for all peoples and faiths is secured...
When the door is open to all, in mutual respect and good will.
When every sacred symbol and spiritual story is welcomed.
When the truths that nurture us do not hinge on making others wrong.
When—bridging culture, race, and faith to be human with each other—
We creatively appreciate life’s blessings and
Work collaboratively to improve life for all.

VISION

Sovereignty is living truth from the heart

MISSION

To provide safe spaces for Indigenous women to uncover the power, strength and skills they possess to become positive forces for social change in their families and communities.
Our Values

- Wina ta yay
- Wowatsi
- Kwee wa-sen wa vi tuu
- Together we live these values
- Living life as a prayer, What you give comes back, purposeful living, reciprocity
- female and male, ancestral knowingness

Our Values

- Agin
- Nan ochuu Kweevo
- Seegi ma vay i
- Respectful caring of self and others, respect
- Mother Earth, living as Tewa
- Loving, caring, looking out for each other

Principles of Spirit-Rooted Activism

1. STILLNESS AS AN ACT OF POWER
   Cultivate a quiet mind is an effective antidote to chaos.

2. ENVISIONING AS AN ACT OF POWER
   - Transform the world, through the power of thought.

3. INTERPERSONAL HEALING AS AN ACT OF POWER
   - The Circle is a sacred circle. It holds the pain, as well as the possibility for transformation
Principles of Spirit-Rooted Activism

4. DEPTH OF INSIGHT AS AN ACT OF POWER
   Depth of a conversation vs. number of people.

5. RADICAL GOOD WILL AS AN ACT OF POWER
   Recognition and affirmation of the spiritual innocence in all.
   $ is not as powerful as prayer, imagination, or love.

Principles of New Activism

6. CREATING SACRED SPACE AS AN ACT OF POWER
   People gathered in a circle, casts a web of healing power.

7. SPIRITUALLY CENTERED ACTION AS ACT OF POWER
   By standing for what could be, as opposed to fighting what is, we wield power. By making a stand for a new possibility, we attain the power to create it.

Why are we here today?

For Women, For Children
For Families, For Our Future
New Mexico

- Worst in Nation for deaths from illicit and prescription drugs and alcohol
- 3rd highest percentage of people living in poverty
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults
- Most diverse population 44% Hispanic, 10% Native American, 2% African American, 1.4% Asian and Pacific Islander

New Mexico

- State with 2nd highest percentage of Native Americans
- One of four poorest in the country
- 36.5% speaks a language other than English at home

Rio Arriba County

- One of most rural counties.
- One of the poorest counties in New Mexico with an average per capita income of $19,537 and an unemployment rate of 7.2% while the national average is 9.7%.
- 76% Hispanic, 14% Native American 
  (2002 U.S. Census)
Rio Arriba County

- 50% Graduate from high school
- Death rates for diseases associated with chronic alcohol abuse 4 times national average.
- One of the counties with highest unintentional drug overdose death rates.
- Low birth rate 7.2% and NM 8.4% (less than 5lb8oz)
- Teen birth 34.7% (77 per 1000) and NM 31.6%

In Indian Country...

- Annual violent crime rate among American Indians is about 2.5 times the national average.
- Much of this violence has been directed toward women.
- Nearly one-third of victims are between the ages of 18-24.

(American Indians and Crime 1999)

In Indian Country...

- The average annual rate of rape and sexual assault among American Indians is 3.5 times higher than for all races.

(American Indians and Crime 1999)
We Must Find the Courage to Challenge the Violence and Speak the Truth with Honesty

"Cowardice asks the question, Is it safe? Expediency asks the question, Is it politic? Vanity asks the question, Is it popular? But conscience asks the question, Is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because his conscience tells him that it is right."

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

To Understand Prevalence Of Violence in Indian Country

- Historical trauma/ Inter-generational

- Isms and oppression
  - Are
  - Internalized
What is historical trauma?

A combination of immense losses and traumatic events that are perpetrated upon an entire culture. For Native Americans, these losses include:

- Culture
- Language
- Land
- People (deaths due to diseases and war)
- Way of life
- Religion
- Family structure (forced into boarding schools)

What is Complex Trauma?

- Complex traumatic exposure refers to children's experiences of multiple traumatic events that occur within the caregiving system—the social environment that is supposed to be the source of safety and stability in a child's life.

- Typically, complex trauma exposure refers to the simultaneous or sequential occurrences of child maltreatment—including emotional abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse, and witnessing domestic violence—that are chronic and begin in early childhood.
Intergenerational Trauma

What Is Internalized?
- Self-Doubt
- Inferiority, I Am Not Worthy, A Nobody
- Self-Hate, I Cause Bad Things to Happen

Breakdown of the Indigenous World View System
1. Alcohol
2. Reservations
3. Non-Indian Spiritual Beliefs
4. Federal Policies
The World is Made Up
Of Many Pieces

We are . . .
"One piece of the puzzle"
Tewa Women United’s Approach

- Tewa Braiding Way of Community Engagement “Opedi”
  - A Social Justice framework and embedded with the Cultural Values, Beliefs and Language of the Tewa Peoples.
  - An intersectional analysis approach.
  - An intergenerational, multi-cultural approach.
  - Gender-specific yet family/ community embracing.

Environmental Health & Justice:

- Gathering for Mother E.A.R.T.H.
  - LANL Accountability
  - Santa Clara Solar Project
  - Biodiversity
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND JUSTICE

V.O.I.C.E.S.

- Brave Voices
- Spirit of Butterfly

2009 VOICES Stats

- 80% sexual assault/ sexual abuse, 19% DV, 1% Stalking
- 103 individuals served (55 adults, 48 children through direct advocacy/ intervention)
  - 90% female, 10% male
  - 43% Hispanic, 2% African American, 8% White, 1% Pacific Islander and 46% Native American
- 120 peer support group sessions offered impacting 270
- Over 130 Hours family advocacy was provided, 258 hours of mental health services, and 36 hours of healing modalities.
- Emergency shelter for 2 people totaling 2 nights.
- 497 training, meetings, outreach events, radio shows or workshops were offered reaching approximately 12,364 individuals/ participants.
Women's Leadership/ Economic Literacy

- Youth Empowerment Program

- Business/ Entrepreneurial Classes
  - Community Gardens
Indigenous Women’s Health

- Yiya Vi Kagingdi Doula Program
- Community-based research - Tewa Birthing Project and Health Access
- Reproductive Justice
- HIV/AIDS Awareness and Education

[Images of people and community settings related to women’s health]

[Diagram showing various organizations and initiatives related to women’s health]

- ENIPC WIC
- RA County WIC
- NM Office of Women’s Health
- RA Teen Pregnancy Council
- Women’s Health Services
- SisterSong Management

IWH

[Images of people and community settings related to women’s health]
The Circle

- Circle of Grandmothers
- Women’s Tribal Wisdom
  - Youthful Wisdom
  - Men’s Peace Circle

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