

CONNECTING OUR VOICES: OUR COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

A PLATFORM FOR
EMPOWERMENT & COMMUNITY

INSPIRING CHANGE, ONE VOICE AT A TIME

NEWSLETTER: QUARTER 2 / ISSUE 2 / JUNE 2024



OUR MISSION

Our **mission** is to be a community - and comprehensive data-driven model that focuses on creating conditions that support youth 18 years and younger in staying healthy and creating healthy environments.



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QUOTE OF THE QUARTER



“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate acts of its members.”

Coretta Scott King

A REFLECTION BY OUR CO-PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Hello, friends, colleagues, community partners, and family. *Bienvenidos nuestra gente*. We are thrilled to share our second newsletter with you, which celebrates the people, culture, talent, timeless wisdom, and gift of Connecting Our Voices. *Juntos podemos, y ahora, adelante*.

We have worked hard to make Connecting Our Voices a comprehensive program. It includes facilitating the life skills curriculum Families Moving Forward (adapted from Familias Adelante) for 5th and 7th graders. Cultural awareness and sensitivity are essential for our work, especially in the unique cultural landscape of Northern New Mexico. Families Moving Forward emphasizes the protective factors of this rich and diverse environment.

Our youth internship program has successfully introduced young people to various career opportunities in prevention work. These youth learn about advocacy in behavioral health and social service careers. They also acquire skills in creating media campaigns and developing teamwork and leadership skills while boosting their self-esteem and sense of cultural responsibility. Our interns have expressed their enjoyment in learning how to serve their communities.

Through the official launch of our Youth Advisory Council, we aim to help youth in our area understand the power and influence of their voices. In our line of work, we often discuss what youth need but seldom ask the youth themselves. With the guidance of these remarkable young individuals, we hope to improve the outreach of Connecting Our Voices while also enhancing our cultural competency. I am inspired by the work done.

Every day, we collaborate with amazing peers, colleagues, and mentors. I am grateful to work amongst my greatest teachers and mentors: our community's youth.

CYNTHIA LENTINI



Cynthia Lentini
Connecting Our Voices, Co-Program Director
June COV Newsletter, 2024

Cynthia is a first-generation USA citizen, with parents who migrated from Honduras, Central America. She is the youngest of 4 siblings and grew up in Cypress Hills, Brooklyn, NYC. Cynthia has an Associate's Degree in Computer Networking, as well as an Associate's Degree in Paralegal Studies. In 2013, she moved to New Mexico and earned her Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences at Eastern New Mexico University. She is also certified as a Global Career Development Facilitator and Emotional Intelligence Trainer.

Currently, Cynthia is pursuing a Masters in Educational Leadership and Administration. She is deeply dedicated to serving as a community leader, youth mentor, and inclusive community partner. In addition to her professional pursuits, Cynthia is an artist who specializes in drawing using graphite and colored pencils. Furthermore, she serves as the Co-Program Director for NLBHA's Connecting Our Voices Program.

YOUTH INTERN SPOTLIGHT

VALERIE PADILLA

I am writing to share some exciting news about my internship experience with NLBHA. I have had the privilege of being an intern with NLBHA for two consecutive terms, and it has been an incredible journey thus far.

During my time as an intern, I have had the opportunity to meet and work alongside several influential public figures. From the governor and multiple senators to Deputy Cabinet Secretary of Higher Education Patricia Trujillo and Judge Alex Naranjo, these interactions have been invaluable in shaping my understanding of the political landscape and the importance of advocacy.



Valerie Padilla and Judge Alexandra Naranjo

One of the most significant accomplishments from my internship was getting certified in mental health first aid. This certification has not only expanded my knowledge in this field but also given me the tools and confidence to support and empower others. I am particularly proud of the **PSA** I made with my fellow coworkers during the first term of the internship. The **PSA** focused on the importance of mental health awareness, and it was displayed to a group of youth. I, along with the other interns, had the opportunity to do a Q&A session with the group, where we shared our insights and personal experiences. It was incredibly rewarding to witness the positive impact our message had on the youth in attendance. In addition to the experiences,

VALERIE PADILLA



Valerie Padilla
NLBHA Youth Intern

June COV Newsletter, 2024

Valerie Padilla is a youth intern with the National Latino Behavioral Health Association. As a student at Española Valley High School, she is a senior who actively participates in various extracurricular activities. One of her notable roles is as a student council member, where she actively participates in school decisions and events. In addition to her involvement in school activities, Valerie maintains strong academic performance and is consistently on the A honor roll. Her dedication and commitment to her education have not gone unnoticed, as she eagerly awaits the chance to attend college after high school.

Valerie's desire to serve and give back to the community is evident in her efforts to impact her community positively. She has dedicated the last few years to building bonds with the locals and engaging in various service projects. These experiences have allowed her to grow personally and professionally, as she has gained a deeper understanding of the importance of unity and cooperation.

YOUTH INTERN SPOTLIGHT

VALERIE PADILLA

I have also had the opportunity to attend two community events as part of the second term of my internship. I attended two events as part of my spring internship. The first event was the Jimmy Santiago Baca event at Northern NM College, which was sponsored by the Española Chamber of Commerce. At this event, I and the other interns had the opportunity to have a sit-down conversation with Jimmy Santiago Baca and enjoy food, entertainment, and performances by local poets.



Valerie Padilla and Jimmy Santiago Baca

The second event took place at Española Valley High School and was focused on cleaning up the campus. During this event, we held a table to engage with the youth and also helped with the campus cleanup. In addition to participating in these events, we created social media posts for both of them. We also created two social media posts for Mental Health Month.

These occasions allowed me to engage with the community directly, spreading awareness about NLBHA's mission and initiatives. It was inspiring to see firsthand the difference that NLBHA makes in the lives of individuals and families.

Overall, my time as an intern with NLBHA has been incredibly rewarding and I look forward to continuing my summer internship. The opportunities I have had to learn and grow, both personally and professionally, have been invaluable.

VALERIE PADILLA



Valerie Padilla
NLBHA Youth Intern

June COV Newsletter, 2024

Valerie wishes to stay in Española, New Mexico, and continue making a positive impact through her contributions to the community. With her strong work ethic and passion for helping others, she will undoubtedly succeed in her endeavors.

For more information on NLBHA's Connecting Our Voices Youth Internship please visit:

<https://nlbha.org/connecting-our-voices/>

Stay up to date on Connecting Our Voices Youth Interns and the Youth Advisory Council by visiting:

<https://www.facebook.com/NLBHAORG>

I am grateful for the guidance and support I have received from NLBHA, and I look forward to continuing my journey of advocacy and social change.

Thank you for your continued support of NLBHA and its interns. Together, we can make a difference!

HIGHLIGHTING THE EXPERT

HECTOR AVELDAÑO

In this section, we will spotlight the expertise and significance of Hector Aveldaño from Fathers New Mexico. Hector Aveldaño is an expert in men's health, specifically focusing on promoting awareness, education, and support for fathers in New Mexico. As we celebrate Men's Health Month, it is crucial to recognize Hector Aveldaño's contributions and take action to prioritize the well-being of men in our community.

As a society we have come a long way in accepting the fact that mental health is a critical aspect of our overall well-being, but men are still struggling to accept this. Traditional gender roles and societal expectations often discourage men from expressing emotions or seeking help, leading to suffering in silence and devastating consequences.

Men are socialized to be strong, stoic, and unemotional, making it difficult for them to acknowledge vulnerability or weakness. This toxic masculinity perpetuates the stigma surrounding mental health, compelling men to hide their struggles and intensifying their distress.

We can't ignore the statistics anymore. Men are more likely to commit suicide, fall into addiction and commit violent crime at a higher rate than women and it all can be traced back to mental health. Men are less likely to seek professional help and often rely instead on harmful coping mechanisms.

Breaking down these barriers requires a cultural shift and I believe we as men should be the ones to lead this change within ourselves and with our peers.

HECTOR AVELDAÑO



Hector Aveldaño

Fathers New Mexico, Case Manager

June COV Newsletter, 2024

Hector immigrated from Mexico to the Española NM area with his family when he was 8 years old. He graduated from Española Valley High School and obtained an Associate's Degree from Northern NM College. He has organized and advocated for immigrant youth and families since 2011 here in New Mexico and nationwide. He is currently the case manager in the Santa Fe area for Fathers New Mexico.

As a case manager Hector helps families navigate resources and services with a focus on dads who might be experiencing challenges. As an immigrant, father and long time Northern New Mexico resident he is invested in helping immigrant and underserved families thrive.

HectoreFathersNewMexico.org

FATHERS
New Mexico



HIGHLIGHTING THE EXPERT

HECTOR AVELDAÑO

We must encourage our fellow men to speak openly about their emotions and struggles and to not judge or ridicule one another. We need to promote mental health education, reduce stigma, and provide accessible support services.

As a case manager with Fathers New Mexico, I see how fatherhood can change a man and in most instances it motivates them to take care of themselves and better themselves in order to best support their children. It is not uncommon for us at Fathers NM to have men tell us they're not feeling well mentally and that they just want to be happy. We should expect every man to say things like this, not just fathers.

As a man, when was the last time you stopped to think, "Am I happy? Am I OK," - it is 100% okay to not be happy and to not be okay because at the end of the day we're just humans with complex feelings. There is nothing wrong with having feelings or emotions but how we express them makes all the difference.

When men are mentally healthy and feel it is safe to acknowledge mistakes, address their unhappiness and engage in healing, they are likely to be wonderful caregivers, friends and partners. Any conversation about giving our children the tools and opportunities to live rewarding lives must include conversations about men's mental health and the ways our family support systems can engage and support them. As men, we must do the work and support each other to do the work.

HECTOR AVELDAÑO



Hector Aveldaño
Fathers New Mexico, Case Manager
June COV Newsletter, 2024

Fathers New Mexico is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping young men become great fathers. They utilize various methods, including mentoring, teaching, and group activities, to establish trust and support with the fathers. The assistance provided by FathersNM encompasses job placement, education, and connection to local services. Their primary objective is to empower dads to be responsible, healthy fathers, partners, and community members. FathersNM serves over 150 dads annually, contributing to positive outcomes for the whole family.

Visit the Fathers New Mexico website today to learn more about how you can get involved and make a difference in your community. <https://www.fathersnewmexico.org/>



2024 LATINO EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM & PRACTICES SYMPOSIUM

Advancing Equity in Hispanic/Latino/a Behavioral Health Research, Evidence-based Programs, and Practices: Designing Future Directions and Policy Recommendations.

This one-day event focuses on mental health and substance use research recommendations for the Hispanic/Latino (H/L) community. NLBHA will present its eCompendium of Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) and Guide, curated by the Evidence-Based Practice Subcommittee (EBPSC).

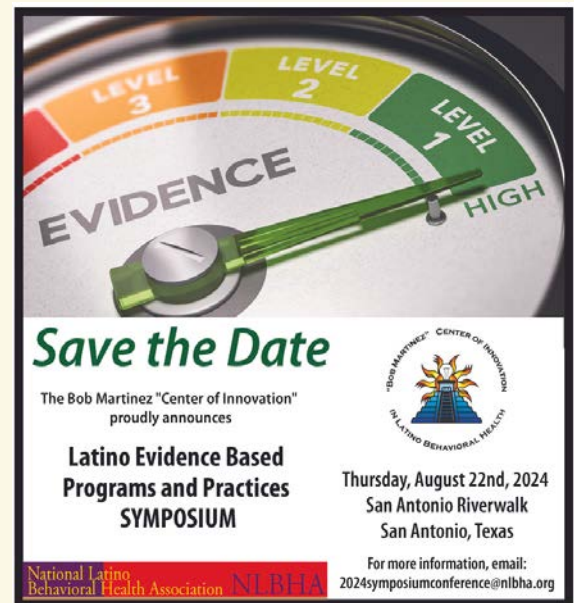
Esteemed speakers include Dr. Nora Volkow, Dr. Lisa Cacari-Stone, and Dr. Cristina Rabadán-Diehl, will address community-based research challenges and the need for new innovative research efforts for the Hispanic/Latino/a community.

Through a participatory-based approach, the symposium attendees will contribute to developing directions and recommendations for future Hispanic/Latino/a/ practice, research, and policy.

The Symposium will contribute to the development of a Latino Research Policy Paper that will document findings and recommendations to inform the advancement and development of Latino evidence-based practices and programs.

This policy paper will be distributed to various stakeholders including community-based

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN



**8:30 am CST - 4:45 pm CST on August 22, 2024
at the Hyatt Regency Riverwalk
in San Antonio, TX**

Register no later than Thursday, August 15, 2024.

For more information, please visit:

<https://nlbha.org/2024-ebpsymposium/>

organizations, research centers, policymakers, and government entities.

NLBHA will propose recommendations for improving research equity and addressing disparities in Latino behavioral health research and practice.

Join us in beautiful San Antonio, Texas on August 22nd, 2024, at the gorgeous Hyatt Regency on the famous Riverwalk!

UPCOMING EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

Mental Health FIRST AID
FOR MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

WHY YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?
Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among children and adolescents ages 11-18.

10.2% of youth will be diagnosed with a substance use disorder in their lifetime.
1 IN 5 youth will have a mental health condition.
50% of youth will be diagnosed with a mental health condition before age 18.

WHO SHOULD KNOW MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

- Teachers
- School Staff
- Counselors
- Camp Counselors
- Youth Group Leaders
- Parents
- Healthcare Workers
- Anyone who works with Youth.

WHAT MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID COVERS:

- Common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges in this age group, including anxiety, depression, worry, obsessive and compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, ADHD, oppositional defiant disorder.
- Common signs and symptoms of substance use challenges.
- How to connect with a crisis or substance use crisis.
- How to connect the youth with help.
- Expanded content on trauma, substance use, self-care and the impact of social media on behavior.

FREE Blended (ONLINE) Courses offered by NLBHA.

Webinar - Learners complete a 4-hour, self-paced online course, and participate in a 1.5-hour, instructor-led training.

Date: June 27, 2024
Time: 9am to 2:30pm (MT)
Reserve your spot at: https://bit.ly/YMHFA_June27

Youth Mental Health First Aid

Don't forget to mark your calendars! The National Latino Behavioral Health Association's Mental Health Awareness Collaborative is hosting a youth mental health first aid training - absolutely free of charge. Make the most of this opportunity and be part of this essential session on Thursday, June 27 from 9 am to 2:30 pm.

Visit [Youth Mental Health First Aid Training](https://bit.ly/YMHFA_June27) to register!

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL & JUNIOR FILM FESTIVAL

SAVE THE DATE

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 11, 2024
FROM 11:30 - 1:30
- LUNCH PROVIDED

JUNIOR FILM FESTIVAL

ESPAÑOLA VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Location:
Northern New Mexico College

Immediately followed by Junior Film Festival

National Latino Behavioral Health Association | NLBHA | CDC | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Youth Advisory Council & Junior Film Festival

Don't forget to mark your calendar! The next youth advisory council meeting is scheduled for July 11 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm at Northern New Mexico College. After the meeting, get ready for the exciting Española Chamber of Commerce Junior Film Festival.

Questions?
Contact Cynthia@NLBHA.org

del Norte LOV Foundation
Back to School EVENT
in collaboration with

LANL FOUNDATION
Investing in Community & Human Potential

EPS
Española Public Schools
Striving for Excellence

Carlos F. Vigil Middle School | Saturday, July 27, 2024
1260 Industrial Park Rd., Española NM 87532 | from 8:30am - 10:30am

Free School Supplies Fun Games Food

All proceeds will benefit the **del Norte LOV Foundation**

Save the date for the Back to School Event at Carlos F. Vigil Middle School on July 27 from 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM. Join us for a morning of fun family activities and pick up all the school supplies you need for the upcoming year.

Visit www.delnortelovfoundation.org/ for more information!

SAN MARTIN DE PORRES SOUP KITCHEN

PAINTED PLATES GALA

JOIN US FOR A COCKTAIL HOUR, FOLLOWED BY A 5-COURSE MEAL PREPARED BY 3-TIME FOOD NETWORK CHAMPION FERNANDO RUIZ OF ESCONDIDO RESTAURANT, SERVED ALONG SIDE SPECIALTY-PAIRED WINES; ALL WHILE ENJOYING LIVE MUSIC & PERFORMANCES!

FIFTY (50) TICKET HOLDERS WILL RECEIVE A ONE-OF-A-KIND PLATE UNIQUELY PAINTED BY ONE OF FIFTY LOCAL & WORLD RENOWNED ARTISTS AND CURATED BY ESTEEMED ARTIST TOBY MORFIN

\$125/TICKET: INCLUDES 5-COURSE MEAL & ENTERTAINMENT
\$250/TICKET: INCLUDES 5-COURSE MEAL, ENTERTAINMENT & ONE-OF-A-KIND HAND PAINTED PLATE

ANTHONY'S AT THE DELTA / LA FONDA DEL SOL RESTAURANT

SATURDAY 4 PM **24** AUGUST 2024

TICKETS / SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
505-927-8284
www.smdpsoupkitchen.com/events

San Martin De Porres Soup Kitchen Painted Plates GALA

Join us for a cocktail hour, followed by a 5-course meal prepared by a 3-time Food Network Champion Fernando Ruiz of Escondido Restaurant. All while enjoying live music & performances!

Saturday, August 24
4 PM at La Fonda Del Sol Restaurant

505-927-8284
www.smdpsoupkitchen.com

CELEBRATE WITH US!

JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
<u>Men's Health Month</u>	<u>National Parents' and Guardians' Day</u>	<u>International Overdose Awareness Week</u>
<u>National HIV Testing Day</u>	<u>National Recreation and Parks Month</u>	<u>International Youth Day</u>

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

CONNECTING OUR VOICES

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Connecting Our Voices: Our Community Newsletter is the perfect opportunity to showcase your talents and achievements. If you want to be featured in the next edition, please reach out to newsletter editor Elizabeth Rodriguez Diaz at Elizabeth@NLBHA.org.

We invite you to be a part of our monthly Connecting Our Voices Coalition Meeting. The coalition meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of each month, virtually and in-person. If you are interested in attending, please contact us for details and an invitation.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow community members and contribute your voice to vital discussions. Your presence and participation will make a difference.

Let's come together and strengthen our community through the power of communication and collaboration.

National Latino Behavioral Health Association **NLBHA**

