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## NEW MEXICO HEALTH EQUITY PARTNERSHIP



## New Mexico Health Equity Partnership News

Generously supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Santa Fe Community Foundation

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## Network Engagement

### The New Mexico Health Equity Partnership Network

The [New Mexico Health Equity Partnership](#) (NMHEP), an initiative of the [Santa Fe Community Foundation](#) believes every New Mexican should have the opportunity to lead a healthy life, to live in neighborhoods where our children and families can thrive and to be able to have a say in the decisions that impact their

communities and their lives.

[NMHEP](#) plays a critical role in connecting people, community groups and decision makers. We help elevate the community's voice so residents can be the drivers of change. During November, NMHEP and our partners hosted many important events, including policy/advocacy days and an action-oriented small group gathering. These events served as opportunities to organize and mobilize across diverse communities to learn with each other, and make sure voices were heard on issues that mattered most to communities.

During November 12 to 14th, [Doña Ana Communities United](#) had the opportunity to travel to Gallup, Albuquerque, and Las Vegas for two policy advocacy days. This weekend followed the presidential election. A team member from Doña Ana Communities United team member, shared her experience.

*I, as an individual, had a difficult time processing the election results and what that was going to mean for our nation. Over this weekend, I had seen a blanket of uncertainty arise in conversation within both the Gallup and Las Vegas advocacy gatherings. Although people were concerned, they were determined to unite as a community to move forward and dedicate their time to fighting injustice. This sense of unity and determination gave me hope and a reminder to not feel defeated. Overall, I am grateful for the time I was able to spend traveling and for all the new connections I made. I hope to further establish these new relationships and to continue growing the advocacy work we are doing.*

- Parisa Shirazi

We recognize we are in a time of great uncertainty and there is much work to be done, but we are honored and humbled to be part of a network building community across diverse regions of New Mexico to create positive change. We hope you will take a moment to read our newsletter and learn how community partners are working to create a healthier New Mexico. This newsletter includes meaningful reflections from community members on the recent gatherings they have planned and participated in.

Please consider joining the NMHEP as a [network member](#) to be part of a larger movement making lasting positive change for all New Mexicans, engage in dialogue through our [on line discussion forum](#), and [donate](#) to support our important efforts!

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## Policy & Advocacy

Years ago, community partners creatively envisioned what have now come to be called NMHEP policy/advocacy days. Community partners proposed having gathering spaces where they could strengthen and practice their advocacy skills on issues that mattered most to them. Furthermore, they were excited to be part of a statewide network and wanted their trusted partners from other parts of the state to attend their events. Partners who have implemented these policy/advocacy days are visionaries who are paving as they strengthen relationships and mobilize across diverse communities (rural, urban, immigrant, indigenous, homeless, etc.) on a variety of issues.

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### McKinley Policy Advocacy Day on Workers' Rights



The McKinley Workers Justice Coalition who are currently working on a [Health Impact Assessment](#) on wage theft hosted a messaging training on November 12, 2016 in Gallup. Wage theft impacts families when workers are not paid overtime, misclassified, not paid the minimum wage, or simply not paid. The HIA will be an educational document used to educate the general public and decision makers about the significance of protecting low-wage workers. The HIA and policy advocacy day provided an opportunity to bring communities together across cultural differences to build the power of the people. Approximately, 30 individuals participated in the policy advocacy day. In addition to diverse community members from McKinley County, community members from Doña Ana, San Juan, and Santa Fe counties, came to learn more about the health impacts of wage theft and support the coalition. Many individuals who traveled from afar realized that wage theft was also an issue within their own communities. Kari Bachman, Coordinator for Doña Ana Communities United stated:

*The week after this event, two of our community members who attended shared what they learned at one of our meetings. They recognized that the wage theft they had experienced when they were homeless was similar to the experiences shared by Gallup residents.*

The HIA on Wage Theft will be realized in the near future. Please stay tuned for future information about how to get involved and learn more about the work of the [coalition](#).

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## Las Vegas Policy Advocacy Day – Advocacy FOR and WITH Each Other





*Photos by Robert Yee*

Later in the month, on November 14, 2016 over 80 individuals gathered at The Spot in Las Vegas for a policy/advocacy day. The purpose was to build unity and to learn more about incarceration, addiction, and poverty in Northeast New Mexico. While most folks were from the local community in Las Vegas, peers also joined from Las Cruces, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe. During the event, Pat Leahan presented on the findings and recommendations of a recent Health Impact Assessment the community had completed on the reintegration center and its services. Community members, Frances Lucero and Victoria Baca shared their stories about being through the system and offered practical solutions. The event was also an opportunity to learn from Abuko D. Estrada, New Mexico Center for Law and Poverty Staff Attorney about upcoming policy issues relevant to the 2017 legislative session.

Naomi Swinton with the United World College-USA Director of Experiential Education and Director of the Bartos Institute for the Constructive Engagement of Conflict, noted that the policy advocacy forum was inspiring. It provided an important overview of current and upcoming issues, gave insight into the pain and confusion individuals are experiencing in our area related to health care, poverty and criminal justice issues, and also presented a compelling sense of shared values and priorities and a growing capacity to tackle these at the local and state level. Swinton explained that the *UWC-USA is grateful to HEP and the Las Vegas Peace & Justice Center for their hard work in organizing the event and supporting follow up. She felt the students came away thoughtful and more educated about challenges and possible strategies for making a difference.*

The event concluded with a community dialogue. Many people expressed excitement about the opportunity to share and learn from one another. A HEP network member from Santa Fe, shared:

*HEP and the San Miguel team did an outstanding job convening diverse voices and creating a rich learning space. Speaking from their hearts, the presenters shined an honest light on New Mexico's health challenges, inspiring participants to share their own experiences and express their desire to take action. The San Miguel team facilitated a powerful discussion, lifting up community members' concerns and needs. It was clear people were there because they were moved to improve their lives and their community. – Sophie Andar*

At the event, community members, families, local organizations, students and decision-makers came together to build connections, trust, and learn from each other. Unity was an important theme of the evening. Demonstrating the importance of unity, Abdulrahman Mohammed Ali Al-Rayyis, United World College-USA student from Iraq indicated *that one of the most inspiring moments he had was when the whole community stood together in a circle and held hands. It was his first local event in Las Vegas and it gave him so much hope in this community.*

Similarly, a representative from the Santa Fe Community Foundation shared that the heartfelt story why we do this work.

*The women who shared their stories conveyed not only the reality of being incarcerated but the gratefulness of knowing they are supported as they find their right place in their community. Open forum meetings like the one in Las Vegas can bring unity to all members of a community. Listening, speaking and doing the work. Bravo NMHEP! – Alberto Granados*

HEP was honored to have María Gallegos, Co-Founder of HEP at the Las Vegas policy/advocacy event. Below she shares her reflection on the Las Vegas policy advocacy day. We offer her reflection as a closing to this article.

*One of my earliest memories is of my Grandpa's consejos or "advice." He taught me the importance of humility and paying attention to the stories told in our community. He taught me to respect and value the ways in which our People organize to take care of the needs of our communities. He assured me that our People would always organize. On, Monday, November 14, 2016 I attended a policy/advocacy day in Las Vegas, New Mexico at a place called "The Spot."*

*Coming Home. Inside "The Spot", a quick ride up the hill from the pink house on Pacific Avenue (the home we lived after I was born) community members gathered to hear stories. Beautiful women bravely sharing their lived experiences and their efforts to change policy in the community they call home. Las Vegas is a place I hold dear to my heart. A place that shaped much of how I view community organizing, policy and advocacy.*

*As I sat in the back of the room and watched the women share their stories- it brought me back to the many community meetings I attended as a child in rooms like the one we were in. Places where families came together to care for each other. As I watched community members listen, with intention, to the amazing work the Health Impact Assessment Team has done, the realization hit me- we had organized. - María Gallegos*

*Photos by Pat Leahan*



## Gallup Independent Weekend Edition - Looking within: Health Impacts of the Uranium Legacy in McKinley

The McKinley County Commissioners is currently holding public readings of the potential moratorium to "pause" uranium mining to further understand the health impacts of previous mining and milling activities. The second public reading was held on December 13, 2016. The next public reading will be held in January 2017. We welcome you to join us.

Please take a moment to read the letter to the editor below regarding the health impacts of the uranium mining in McKinley County.

### Looking within: health impacts of the uranium legacy in McKinley

To the editor, Uranium mining casts a long shadow over our families and community.

In July 1979, at the United Nuclear Corporation's uranium mill, located about 15 miles from Gallup, a dam broke releasing more than 1,100 tons of uranium mining waste, aka "tailings," along with 100 million gallons of radioactive water into the Pipeline Arroyo and downstream into the Rio Puerco. According to the New Mexico Office of the State Historian, the Church Rock Tailings Spill is the largest accidental release of radioactive materials in United States history. Red Water Pond Road community, adjacent to this spill, has lived with the impacts of uranium mining and milling since the 1960s.

Unfortunately, the Church Rock Tailings Spill was not an isolated incident. In Red Water Pond Road, there are three uranium related Superfund sites that have exposed community members to radioactive and toxic materials for decades. Exposure to uranium can potentially cause tremendous detrimental effects on those who come in contact with the metal. This may happen by living in close proximity to uranium mines or milling sites, previously working in the mines, or exposure to contaminated areas.

In response to the impacts of uranium exploitation in the county, McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity, formerly McKinley Community PLACE MATTERS, conducted a health impact assessment by bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders to look at the health impacts of the uranium legacy. The



assessment builds on previous studies, addresses health broadly and is culturally sensitive rather than limiting its scope to only physical or disease-related impacts. The assessment aims to elevate the voices of community members impacted by past and potential future mining efforts and provide decision makers with useful information about health disparities.

The assessment's conclusions were revealing. We learned the uranium mining industry often failed to provide proper protective clothing and safety measures. Miners ate their lunches while working in the mine and reportedly drank water that dripped from the mine ceilings. Many workers came home with their work clothes covered in "yellow cake," which exposed their families to uranium.

Milling activities were equally dangerous. Millers were subjected to radioactive dust during crushing operations and to sulfuric acids, sodium chlorate and solvents from leaching and extraction operations. There is strong evidence about the relationship between both occupational and non-occupational exposure to uranium mine or mill sites and increased risks of diseases.

Many individuals struggle with environmentally induced post-traumatic stress syndrome and post-traumatic stress disorder from their experiences living in the contaminated area and dealing with the slow and arduous cleanup process. Despite community concerns, there have been limited community health studies conducted and inadequate cleanup of existing facilities.

Given the uranium industry's known impacts, the McKinley County Commission should enact a moratorium on further mining and processing until all the economic, natural resource and public health facts can be gathered to help shape local policy that protects our communities. Only after the facts have been evaluated can the county make clear decisions about uranium mining in the future.

-Jordon Johnson, Gallup

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## Capacity Building

### Action-Oriented Small Group Gathering

Over the past year, NMHEP members have been on a journey to develop policy strategies across issue areas under a Health in All Policies framework. In June, 64 representatives from across the state - engaged in NMHEP activities - came together at the Statewide Health Equity Gathering in June to make policy recommendations based on their lived experiences. As a follow up, on November 30, 2016, NMHEP network members joined together to strengthen relationships and trust among partners; deepen knowledge of priority issue areas (decolonizing policy makers, transforming education, immigrant and refugee rights) our members are already working on; build our skills to map allies and decision makers around transforming education; and confirm ways to support each other's efforts moving forward. We would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who shared their gifts to make this gathering possible. We appreciate the authentic dialogue and space to build relationships across diverse communities. We are grateful to our partners in San Juan County who shared their expertise and knowledge in indigenous thinking and doing and guided us to work in the spirit of beauty, harmony and balance.





Please click above to see a short video of the day on the NMHEP's Facebook page

## Thank you to our Allies!

In November, NMHEP participated in key events hosted by our allies. We are grateful to the [National Collaborate for Health Equity](#) for hosting the 2017 National Action Lab where we learned about the important efforts taking place in Detroit to advance racial equity and improve community health. Our partners at the [Notah Begay III foundation](#) launched NB3FIT DAY, a national day of inspiration, learning and physical movement to support the health and fitness of Native American youth. During NMHEP's busy month of events and travels, it was great to be outdoors with community members and run! Additionally, NMHEP had the opportunity to be a planning partner and participant in the Ethnic Studies Summit – "We are the Seeds" at the Atrisco Heritage Academy in Albuquerque. It is essential that diverse communities have opportunities in our educational system to articulate, learn and honor our diverse histories, develop critical conscious and identities.



## Partner Capacity Building Opportunities and Events

[Santa Fe Community Foundation](#) - The NMHEP's institutional home, the Santa Fe Community Foundation



(SFCF), is committed to supporting nonprofits in achieving their missions with excellence. The SFCF's Philanthropy HUB has been designed as a learning and gathering place for the philanthropic sector. The HUB's programs strive to: 1) deepen philanthropic practice; 2) build nonprofit capacity; 3) provide support for professional advisers; and 4) provide platforms for learning about social issues in community. Upcoming trainings and presentations include:

- Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 5:30 PM  
[Santa Fe Community Foundation Open House](#)  
A community celebration
- Thursday, December 15, 2016  
[Nonprofit Executive Director Learning Circle](#)  
A year-end gathering
- Tuesday, January 10, 2017 at 9:00 AM  
[Policy and Advocacy: Navigating Nonprofit Advocacy-](#) A workshop with Santa Fe attorney Getchen Elsner.
- Thursday, January 19, 2017 at 8:30 AM  
[Nonprofit Leadership: Executive Director Learning Circle](#) - A peer discussion group facilitated by Roy Bowen.

If you are a NMHEP network member and you have an upcoming training, workshop, or other capacity building opportunity open to community members and organizations, please send information about it to [David Gaussoin](#) and the NMHEP team can include it an upcoming newsletter.

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# CAMPUS CROSSROADS

## Monthly Film Series about Intersections of Identity and Community.

This event is a collaboration with POV, PBS' award-winning nonfiction film series.

### FREE!

**First Tuesdays of each month, from 11:30am-1:30pm, in Room 223.**

**The East Wing Eatery will be there with their \$5 NACHO BAR!**

Bring your lunch, your class, your pals, your fam, and kick back between classes at the Campus Crossroad's Monthly Film Series. The Center for Diversity and Integrated Learning will provide corresponding curriculum and lesson plans (including critical thinking questions, activities, and information about historical context, etc.). If you'd like this material in advance, email [thecenter@sfcc.edu](mailto:thecenter@sfcc.edu) or call (505)428-1467.

**September 6, 2016: *Al Otro Lado***  
 To celebrate Indigenous People's Day, we chose *Al Otro Lado*, which follows Magdiel, an aspiring corrido composer from the drug capital of Mexico, as he faces two difficult choices to better his life: to traffic drugs or to cross the border illegally into the United States. An Official Selection of the Tribeca Film Festival.

**October 4, 2016: *Up Heartbreak Hill***  
 To celebrate Indigenous People's Day, join us for the story of Thomas and Tamara, who are track stars at their rural New Mexico high school. Like many teenagers, they are torn between the lure of brighter futures elsewhere and the ties that bind them to home. For these teens, however, home is an impoverished town on the Navajo reservation, and leaving means separating from family, tradition and the land that has been theirs for generations. Erica Scharf's *Up Heartbreak Hill* is a moving look at a new generation of Americans struggling to be both Native and modern.

**November 1, 2016: *Soldiers of Conscience***  
 When is it right to kill? In the midst of war, is it right to refuse? In honor of the upcoming Veteran's Day, Eight U.S. soldiers today, some who killed and some who said no, reveal their inner moral dilemmas in *Soldiers of Conscience*. Made with official permission of the U.S. Army, the film transcends politics to explore the tension between spiritual values and military orders.


**December 6, 2016: *Best Kept Secret***  
 In honor of Disability Awareness Month, join us for *Best Kept Secret*, in which Janet Mino, an instructor who has taught a class of young men for four years, is on an urgent mission. She races against the clock as graduation approaches for her severely autistic minority students. Once they graduate and leave the security of this nurturing place, their options for living independently will be few. Mino must help them find the means to support themselves before they "age out" of the system.

**February 7, 2017: *All the Difference***  
 For Black History Month, *All the Difference* weaves together five years of stories about two promising young men as they navigate their lives in low-income, high-risk communities in Chicago. Statistics predict they will drop out of high school; both graduate and go on to college in spite of all the odds. The film explores the factors in their lives (parents and grandparents, teachers, role models and community support) that made all the difference - an example of prioritizing education as a tool to secure a place in the middle class. The film is part of American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen, a national public media initiative made possible by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).


**March 7, 2017: *Señorita Extraviada***  
 Because sometimes Women's History Month reminds us that not all women are represented in history books, and there's still so much more work to be done, join us for *Señorita Extraviada*: Someone is killing the young women of Juárez, Mexico. Since 1993, over 270 young women have been raped and murdered in a chillingly consistent and brazen manner. Authorities ignore pleas for justice from the victims' families and the crimes go unpunished. Most disturbingly, evidence of government complicity remains uninvestigated as the killings continue to this day. Crafting a film that is both a poetic meditation and a mystery, *Señorita Extraviada* is a haunting investigation into an unspeakable crime wave amid the disorders and corruption of one of the biggest border towns in the world.

**April 3, 2017: *Nostalgia for the Light***  
 Patricio Guzmán's *Nostalgia for the Light* is a remarkable meditation on memory, history and eternity. Chile's remote Atacama Desert, 10,000 feet above sea level, provides stunningly clear views of the heavens. But it also holds secrets from the past in its arid soil: human remains, from pre-Columbian mummies to the bones of political prisoners "disappeared" during the Pinochet dictatorship. In this otherworldly place, earthly and celestial quests meld: Archaeologists dig for ancient civilizations, women search for their loved ones and astronomers scan the skies for new galaxies.

**May 2, 2017: *Ping Pong***  
 May is Older American's Month, or, as some call it: "Old age, extreme edition!" Take eight players with 703 years between them compete in the Over 80 World Table Tennis Championships in China's Inner Mongolia. British players Terry, 81, who has been given a week to live, and Les, 91, a weightlifter and poet, are going for the gold. Inge, 89, from Germany, has used table tennis to paddle her way out of dementia. And Texan Lisa, 85, is playing for the first time. *Ping Pong* is a wonderfully unusual story of hope, regret, friendship, ambition, love—and sheer human tenacity in the face of aging and mortality.



**This event is a collaboration with**  
**POV, PBS' award-winning**  
**nonfiction film series. Check out**  
**the POV website: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/>**



**SANTA FE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
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**& INTEGRATED LEARNING**

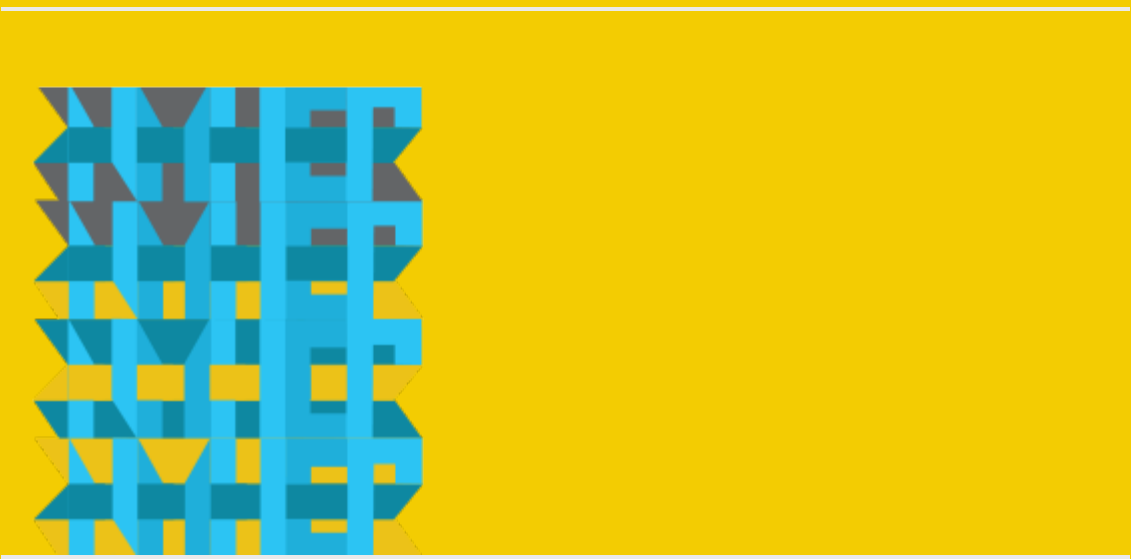
## NMHEP's Health Impact Assessment Services

The NMHEP has trained communities and organizations across New Mexico on how to use [Health Impact Assessment](#) to elevate community voice as part of decision making and to ensure community health is prioritized.

Interested in Health Impact Assessment?

Please take a moment to read an overview of our menu of [Health Impact Assessment services](#) and complete the [survey](#) so we can assess continued community interest in Health Impact Assessment and

how NMHEP, through our, Health Impact Assessment services may best support your social justice and community health efforts in the future.



Donate Today

New Mexico Health Equity Partnership – Generously supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Santa Fe Community Foundation, for more information, please visit [nmhep.org](http://nmhep.org)

Our mailing address is:

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