

*Third Annual  
Conference on*

# NATIVE AMERICAN NUTRITION

CONFERENCE REPORT

OCTOBER  
2-5, 2018



MYSTIC LAKE  
CASINO HOTEL



Seeds of Native Health  
A Campaign for Indigenous Nutrition



HEALTHY FOODS,  
HEALTHY LIVES INSTITUTE  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA





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Drawing an even larger audience than its two predecessors, the Third Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition offered a wide array of opportunities for conference participants to learn, network, and share knowledge. The conference offered pre-session workshops; documentary film screenings and poster sessions; keynotes, breakout sessions, and lightning-quick 'Pecha Kucha' presentations; elder and family panels; and delicious Indigenous food.

The conference experience enabled participants to engage at the intersection of Indigenous wisdom and academic scholarship, inspiring each other and exploring the dynamic exchange and innovation occurring at the intersection of Native and non-Native knowledge systems to advance well-being in Indian Country.

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**MOMENTUM CONTINUES** *to grow in Indian Country around the revitalization of traditional foods, growth of food sovereignty, and stewardship of knowledge systems that support a healthy food future for all Indigenous people. For the past three years at the Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition, Indigenous leaders and their non-Native partners have shared their traditional ways of knowing, academic research, effective programs, and other insights from tribal communities across the globe. The work is inspiring, and the networking and exchange that results from this event furthers the growth of the Indigenous food movement. Aligning knowledge from multiple traditions and connecting with one another are critical to promoting and preserving the health of Native people and the land long into the future.*

On behalf of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and the University of Minnesota Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute, we were delighted to co-host the Third Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition from October 2-5, 2018. From the beginning, our aim has focused on creating a venue to share and weave together Indigenous wisdom and academic knowledge in a space where people can explore important work, critical questions, and the most pressing needs around food and health in Indian Country. This report shares the highlights from this special event.

The 2018 conference built off the success of previous gatherings, as well as the constructive guidance of conference participants. We added an extra day and additional sessions, offered pre-conference workshops, and increased the number of participants. Key themes guided the content of the conference and included:

**Nutrition across the lifecycle**

**Intergenerational learning about food and nutrition**

**Food systems, food sovereignty, and nutrition**

**Importance of recovery from historical trauma to health and nutrition**

**Perspectives of elders, families and youth**

**Innovative work across Indian Country**

Nearly 600 participants from dozens of Indigenous nations, 38 states, one U.S. territory, four Canadian provinces, and two foreign nations attended the conference. More than half of the conference participants identified as Native American. Conference attendees represented multiple sectors, working for tribal nations, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, funding agencies, and local, state and federal governments.

We are so grateful to the members of the conference Planning Committee for their thoughtful guidance and ongoing leadership in uplifting the importance of food and nutrition in supporting the sovereignty and resilience of Native American nations.

**We hope you'll join us at the Fourth Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition, scheduled for September 15-18, 2019.**

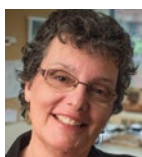
We also extend our thanks to all of you for contributing your voice and efforts to the vitality, traditions and health of Native people.



**Charles R. Vig**

*Chairman*

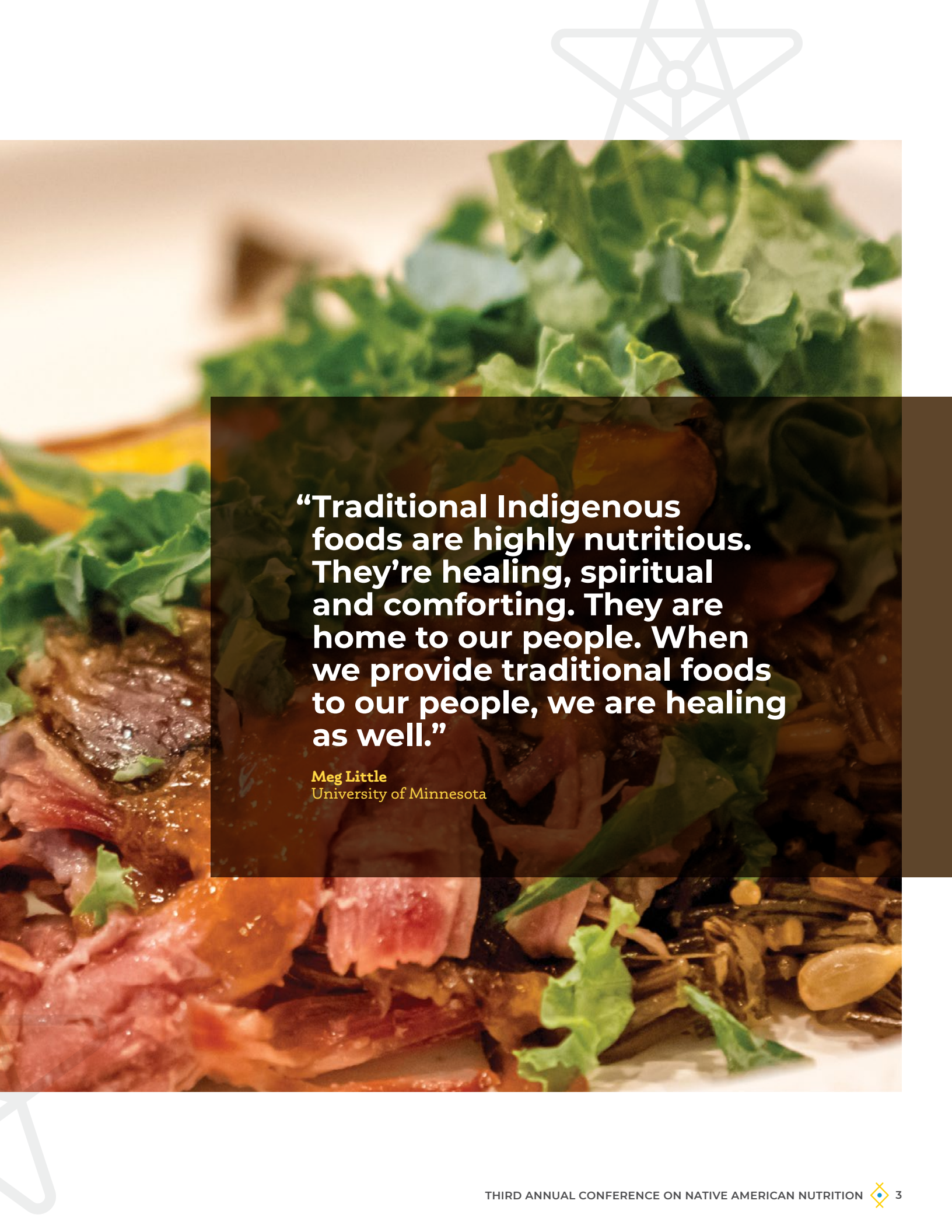
*Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community*



**Mindy Kurzer, PhD**

*Conference Chair*

*Director, Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute,  
College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource  
Sciences, University of Minnesota*



**“Traditional Indigenous foods are highly nutritious. They’re healing, spiritual and comforting. They are home to our people. When we provide traditional foods to our people, we are healing as well.”**

**Meg Little**  
University of Minnesota



# CONFERENCE OPENER AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER HIGHLIGHTS

Numerous pre-conference workshops offered participants an immersion experience into a variety of interesting topics:

## *Native Infusion: Reclaiming Ancestral Beverages*

Valerie Segrest, BSN, MA

(Muckleshoot, FEED Seven Generations)

This hands-on workshop shared information and resources on the health impacts of sugary drinks, recipes for traditional beverages such as infused teas and bone broth, and the nutritional benefits of ancestral beverages.

## *Dream of Wild Health - Youth Garden Tour*

Ernie Whiteman (Northern Arapaho, Dream of Wild Health)  
and Heather Drake (Dream of Wild Health)

This tour of a seedkeeping and traditional food skills organization to its 10-acre farm showcased its youth education and Indigenous food production programs for Native people from urban communities.

## *The Sioux Chef*

Sean Sherman (Oglala Lakota, The Sioux Chef)

Part cooking and nutrition class, part cultural teachings, this workshop encompassed traditional food systems, food skills, and their applications in modern kitchens.

## *Foraging for Native Edible Plants*

Hope Flanagan (Seneca, Dream of Wild Health)

This course on identifying, harvesting and eating wild foods focused on medicinal, spiritual and nutritional properties, and uses of wild plants, as well as how to use proper protocol and build relationships with these relatives.

## *Indigenous Wellness: Ancestral Food-Ways, Indigenizing Fitness and Movement, and the Interconnectedness of Wellness, Culture and Indigenous Language*

Anthony Thosh Collins

(O'odham/Haudenosaunee/Osage, Well for Culture)

This session provided presentation, movement, recipes, and techniques for contemporary Indigenous wellness practices. Blending Western and Eastern knowledge with Native teachings combines physical activity with psycho-spiritual well-being.





## KEYNOTE HIGHLIGHTS

*Featured speakers shared insights at evening keynote addresses, describing the emerging culinary renaissance across Indian Country as well as traditional food systems efforts in Central and South American Indigenous communities.*

### **The (R)Evolution of Indigenous Food Systems of North America**

**Chef Sean Sherman (Oglala Lakota) Founder, The Sioux Chef**

The conference kicked off with an inspiring keynote address from Chef Sean Sherman, who also signed copies of his James Beard Award-winning cookbook, “The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen.”

**“Be the answer to your ancestors’ prayers.”**

Chef Sherman shared the history of the powerful food traditions from Indigenous nations across the continent, including gathering, hunting, agriculture, fishing, and the food preparation and preservation processes of many tribes.

Food trucks, a restaurant, experimental food lab, and educational programs are components of The Sioux Chef’s nonprofit enterprise, building a legacy of restoring and revitalizing Native food systems across Indian Country. This emerging body of work and portfolio of activities are designed to equip Native nations to transform their food system toward traditional, healthy, widely available items and inspire economic development based on Native food traditions for tribal people and communities. Chef Sean described the rapid, devastating consequences to Native food systems, lands, and nations wrought by colonization during the 1800s and Sioux Chef enterprises’ powerful, optimistic and strategic response to healing this complex trauma.

### **Recovering our Ancestors’ Food**

**Aura Leticia Teleguario Sincal, MBA (Maya Kaqchikel) Advisor on Indigenous Peoples’ Issues for USAID and the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala; former Guatemalan Minister of Labor and Social Security**

People have the right to affordable, nutritious, culturally relevant, and accessible healthy food — a critical foundation of health. Tribal people from all continents can be strategic allies in reducing hunger and malnutrition, while strengthening Indigenous food security and food sovereignty. For Indigenous nations, ancestral teachings and traditional foods can build connections among each other and the land — the most effective way of sustaining well-being.

There is growing commitment to this approach across tribal communities throughout the Indigenous world. National governments also have a key role to play in advancing these efforts, including recognition and promotion of Indigenous foods; and policies and regulations that protect these foods from biological, economic and environmental exploitation.

So too do academic institutions, which can conduct responsible, sensitive research and facilitate thoughtful exchanges to advance this cause. Furthermore, training and cultivating the leadership of women in agriculture, food preparation, and decision-making are critical in many communities. It is also incumbent that Native nations consider impending impacts of climate change on agriculture and food sovereignty, designing preventative strategies that address changing environments and emergency food assistance programs.



## SESSION 1

# NUTRITION ACROSS THE LIFECYCLE

*The conference opened with a presentation of the colors by the Sisseton-Wahpeton Kit Fox Society; an honor song from the Native drum group, Iron Boy; and a prayer from SMSC Cultural Director, Leonard Wabasha. The opening ceremony laid the foundation for an event based in Indigenous culture and traditional knowledge.*

### SPEAKERS

**Camie Jae Goldhammer,**  
MSW, LICSW, IBCLC

*Sisseton-Wahpeton*

Independent Clinical Social  
Worker and Lactation Consultant

**Kelli Begay, MS, MBA, RDN**

*Kickapoo/Seminole/  
Muskoke Creek*

Nutrition Consultant, Division  
of Diabetes Treatment and  
Prevention, Indian Health Service

**Petra Harmon One  
Hawk, MPH (pictured right)**

*Standing Rock Dakota and Lakota*

Title VI Director, Nutrition  
for the Elderly/Caregiver  
Support Program, Standing  
Rock Sioux Tribe

### ELDER RESPONDENT

**Beverly Stabber Warne,**  
RN, MSN

*Oglala Lakota*

Coordinator and Instructor,  
South Dakota State University  
School of Nursing



**Petra Harmon One Hawk**  
*Standing Rock Dakota and Lakota*

**The first plenary session featured speakers focused on the importance of nutrition throughout the stages of life of Native people, closing with thoughtful responses from a tribal elder.**



## Reclaiming the Tradition of Breastfeeding: The Foundation of a Nation

**Camie Jae Goldhammer**

Breastfeeding, a traditional practice, provides baby's first food and is essential to Indigenous health. Benefits include greatly reduced incidence of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer for mother and baby, and dramatically lowered risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome for babies. Nursing also significantly decreases health disparities faced by those born in poverty, while increasing healthy bonding and attachment behaviors in a community. Less than 10 percent of Native American babies meet the minimum recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life; just 20 percent are still breastfeeding at one year of age. Increasing breastfeeding rates in tribal communities will require high-quality prenatal care; ongoing healthcare for mother and baby; significant community, employer and family support; and adequate paid leave from work to ensure that mothers have time at home with their babies during the crucial first months.

## It Takes a Village: Effective Approaches to Child Nutrition in Indian Country

**Kelli Begay**

Nutrition is the basis for physical, emotional and mental health, particularly in Native communities where trauma, suicide and adverse childhood experiences have a profound impact on many. Healthy Indigenous nations begin with breastfeeding, avoiding sugary beverages and junk foods, serving adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables, offering healthy fats, and eating together as families. This can be challenging in communities where food insecurity is a real issue for many Indigenous families and healthy, affordable food is not easy to obtain or store. To ensure Native children get the healthy food they need requires providing pediatricians with tools and resources to help families; offering programs where young children have healthy eating-focused early learning curricula and Native youth grow and cook traditional foods; and developing innovative strategies to make sure all tribal communities have adequate access to affordable, healthy food.

## Improving Health of Native American Elders through Increasing Traditional Food Consumption

**Petra Harmon One Hawk**

Ensuring our elders are healthy begins with preventing diet-related health issues. However, historical factors and current barriers present challenges to providing elders with nutritious food. Many tribal communities are "food deserts" with limited healthy food, inadequate transportation, a generational decline in food skills, significant caregiving responsibilities for many, and tight household budgets. Furthermore, forced relocation, government and mission boarding schools, and the elimination of natural food sources have greatly compounded these issues. Solutions include establishing food cooperatives and food policy councils; conducting community food assessments; protecting and re-establishing traditional food systems, such as replanting traditional fruits and other plant foods; and creating comprehensive food security programs. Title VI is an important federal act that provides support to tribes so they can obtain traditional foods, including funds to purchase bullets for hunting game and pay mileage to subsistence hunters, to process game, and to support senior food purchases at farmers markets. Tribal governments can donate traditional foods; facilitate intergenerational nutrition education and gardening programs; and contribute needed equipment and appliances for these programs.

## Elder Perspectives

**Beverly Stabber Warne**

Families in previous generations grew their own food using organic methods, cooked foods from scratch, and hunted, fished and gathered. These ways of doing things kept Native people healthy. Tribal people must change back to this as best as they can. Fortunately, a renaissance is underway. Local governments and business leaders now talk about food security and food sovereignty. Many are blending tribal traditions with science to address Indigenous food and health needs. It's important to know both ways, including following the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, identifying and using Indigenous plants and edibles, and reclaiming traditional languages. This cultural support is critical to restoring healthy traditions and sharing this knowledge with the next generation of healthcare professionals and community members. Everyone must do something as individuals and support each other to build Native nations.



## SESSION 2

# INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING ABOUT FOOD AND NUTRITION

### SPEAKERS

**Evangeline Nuvayestewa**

*Hopi/Tewa*

Retired teacher

**Leon Nuvayestewa Sr.**

*Hopi/Tewa*

Retired Health Director,  
Hopi Nation

**Valerie Nuvayestewa**

*Hopi/Tewa*

Diabetes Prevention  
Educator, Department of  
Health and Human Services,  
The Hopi Tribe

**Erin Eustace**

*Hopi/Tewa/Zuni*

**Ernie Whiteman**

*Northern Arapaho*

Cultural Director,  
Dream of Wild Health

**Missy Whiteman**

*Northern Arapaho/Kickapoo*

Independent Filmmaker

**Louis Whiteman**

*Northern Arapaho*



**“As Hopi, we refer to seeds as children with a twenty-one-day birthing process. We say their names and clans. We take care of them, so they grow up strong and resilient. If we neglect our children, they will be consumed by everything in the world. It takes everybody in the community to raise children.”**

**Evangeline Nuvayestewa**

*Hopi/Tewa*





**“We are planting the seeds  
and growing leaders.”**

**Ernie Whiteman**  
*Northern Arapaho*



### **Nurturing for the Future: A Hopi Perspective**

An intergenerational family panel offered numerous insights about how Hopi traditions, teachings, agricultural practices, and language sustain the culture and health of the people in an integrated way. Ancestral knowledge from centuries ago is passed down through each generation. People share and learn these teachings by modeling the right behaviors; telling important, clan-specific stories during the winter; and listening and watching.

For an agricultural people, the traditional Hopi calendar reflects prescribed activities for growing, preserving and enjoying foods, as well as ceremony and practices that ensure balance and well-being for the community and the spiritual world. Language is a fundamental element to support these traditions; the plants and land hear different vibrations when Hopi is spoken. These days, using new methods to transmit old ways can also be useful. Social media, community visits, word of mouth, and community gardens bring people back to their teachings and traditions.

### **Dream of Wild Health Intergenerational Food Sovereignty Program**

For 20 years, Dream of Wild Health has offered well-regarded learning opportunities on a 10-acre farm for urban Native Americans in the Twin Cities, many of whom are youth experiencing the countryside for the first time. An Indigenous, intergenerational pedagogical approach includes outdoor experiential learning and circle time. Young participants spend their summer days on the farm working with elders and each other to grow traditional foods and sacred tobacco using ancient seeds. They also learn to prepare, enjoy and respect these foods and healing plants, guided by elders and protocol. In collaboration with staff, they create and participate in films focused on traditional stories, improving their media skills and deepening their knowledge of old teachings. Growing plants and making films are both creative acts, enabling young people to honor the Creator through their actions. By providing love and these profound learning opportunities, Dream of Wild Health helps heal historical trauma by gardening and reclaiming Indigenous foods, so these activities become a way of life for the next generation.



## SESSION 3

# FOOD SYSTEMS, FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, AND NUTRITION

### SPEAKERS

**Valerie Blue Bird Jernigan,**  
DPH, MPH

*Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma*

Associate Professor,  
University of Oklahoma College  
of Public Health

**Zachary Ducheneaux**

*Cheyenne River Sioux*

Intertribal Agriculture Council  
Technical Assistance Program

**Debra Echo-Hawk**

*Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma*

Pawnee Keeper of the Seeds  
and Title VI Coordinator

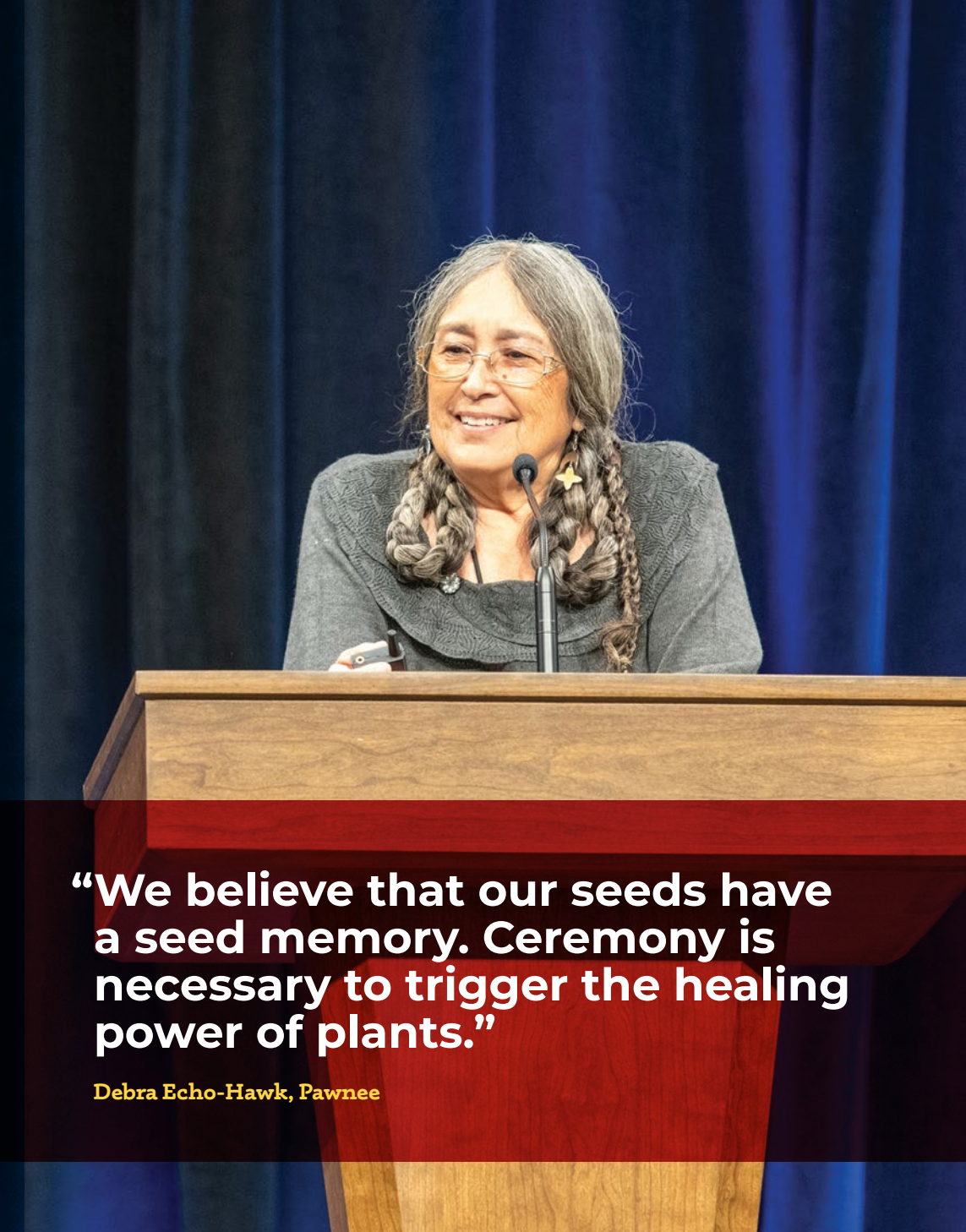
**Jane Mt. Pleasant, PhD**

*Tuscarora*

Cornell University

**Kalidas Shetty, PhD**

North Dakota State University



**“We believe that our seeds have  
a seed memory. Ceremony is  
necessary to trigger the healing  
power of plants.”**

**Debra Echo-Hawk, Pawnee**



## **New Hope for Old Crops: The Pawnee Seed Preservation Project**

**Debra Echo-Hawk**

As people of Earth Lodge villages, the Pawnee people originally came from the stars. The Pawnee have always had seed keepers; they kept the seeds in bundles. When seed keepers died on the Trail of Tears, the Pawnee put their seed bundles in trees because other tribal members didn't know how to care for them. They gave them back to the spirits. Today, Pawnee communities need to become whole again, by rebuilding relationships to seeds, planting, practicing other related traditions, and including children in these practices.

## **Redefining Healthy Food, Reinventing Finance, and Returning to Self-Sufficiency**

**Zachary Ducheneaux**

Food isn't truly healthy for the consumer, unless financial benefits are shared across the entire food value chain. The Farm Bill offers numerous opportunities related to food, health, agriculture, and economic development in Indian Country. Incubating these enterprises; bringing back

traditional foods; developing Native labeling programs; and supporting the growth of tribally controlled food systems in Indigenous communities can generate revenue and build food system we want for tribal nations. Creating new models for financing in Indian Country can help strengthen agriculture, food and farm-related enterprises, and food sovereignty. Rather than relying on commercial banks that place the burden of risk on the borrower, loan products can be designed more like investments in Indian Country, administered via tribally controlled Community Development Finance Institutions which should serve as investment houses, not banks. Philanthropic resources can be used as investment capital for tribally owned food and farm businesses. A percentage of the return on these investments can be used as loan repayment. This type of financing model builds the self-sufficiency of Native nations and expands the availability of food grown by and for tribal people.

## **Farm Bill passed with unprecedented number of Indian Country provisions**

The 2018 Farm Bill marks a new high watermark of federal focus on and investment in Native agricultural production, rural infrastructure, economic development, conservation, and forestry. It also safeguards vitally important nutrition assistance programs for Native Americans. A full list of 63 provisions relating to Native American communities and producers can be found at [NativeFarmBillCoalition.org](http://NativeFarmBillCoalition.org).

## Food Diversity and Indigenous Food Systems to Combat Diet-Linked Chronic Diseases

**Kalidas Shetty**

Community and environmental resilience are based on diversity. The reduction in agricultural and environmental diversity has resulted in a similar drop in dietary diversity. Unhealthy, highly processed foods have crowded out healthy, traditional options, causing obesity and other diet-related chronic diseases. Food crops that are indigenous to specific ecologies and cultures, including whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables, should be reintroduced to strengthen local food systems, community health, and environmental resilience. Traditional crops and accompanying food preparation practices (such as fermented plant foods) are high in fiber, phytochemicals, and other important nutrients that support good health, glycemic control, and beneficial gut biome. These foods benefit pregnant and nursing mothers and build pre- and post-natal foundations for well-being. Managing resilience through the reintroduction of these crops and associated agricultural production practices also support soil health, further increasing the nutritional impact of these foods and mitigating the impacts of climate change. The Three Sisters cropping system reflects this approach to food systems design.

## But What Did They Really Eat? Food Yields from the Three Sisters

**Jane Mt. Pleasant**

The Haudenosaunee used intercropped corns, beans and squash planted on mounds — the “Three Sisters” — for centuries. Planted together, these crops have always been considered family members of the people. A research project focused on the nutritional value of these crops, exploring differences in nutrients between mono-crop and intercropped agricultural systems. This study also evaluated the ability of this cropping system to ensure the food security of tribes which used it. Findings demonstrated that the intercropped Three Sisters model had the most productive yields, provided more nutritious foods, ensured adequate amounts of food for the population, and improved soil quality. How these foods were prepared using traditional methods also positively influenced their nutritional value.

## Promoting Health Through Food Systems and Food Sovereignty Initiatives

**Valerie Blue Bird Jernigan**

Oklahoma Native nations collaborated with researchers to address food insecurity and increase food sovereignty as ways to reduce diabetes and other diet-related chronic diseases. One study introduced affordable, healthy options using a phased approach at tribal convenience stores, including 10 snack and meal choices, taste tests, consumer polling, and culturally based product placement and promotion. Results revealed a significant increase in fruit and vegetable consumption; greater demand for healthy options by tribal members; and strong sales. A second study used tribal farm land for gardening, offered an online curriculum, monthly food sovereignty workshops for community members, and school gardens and related activities. Produce grown from this initiative is donated to tribal schools.

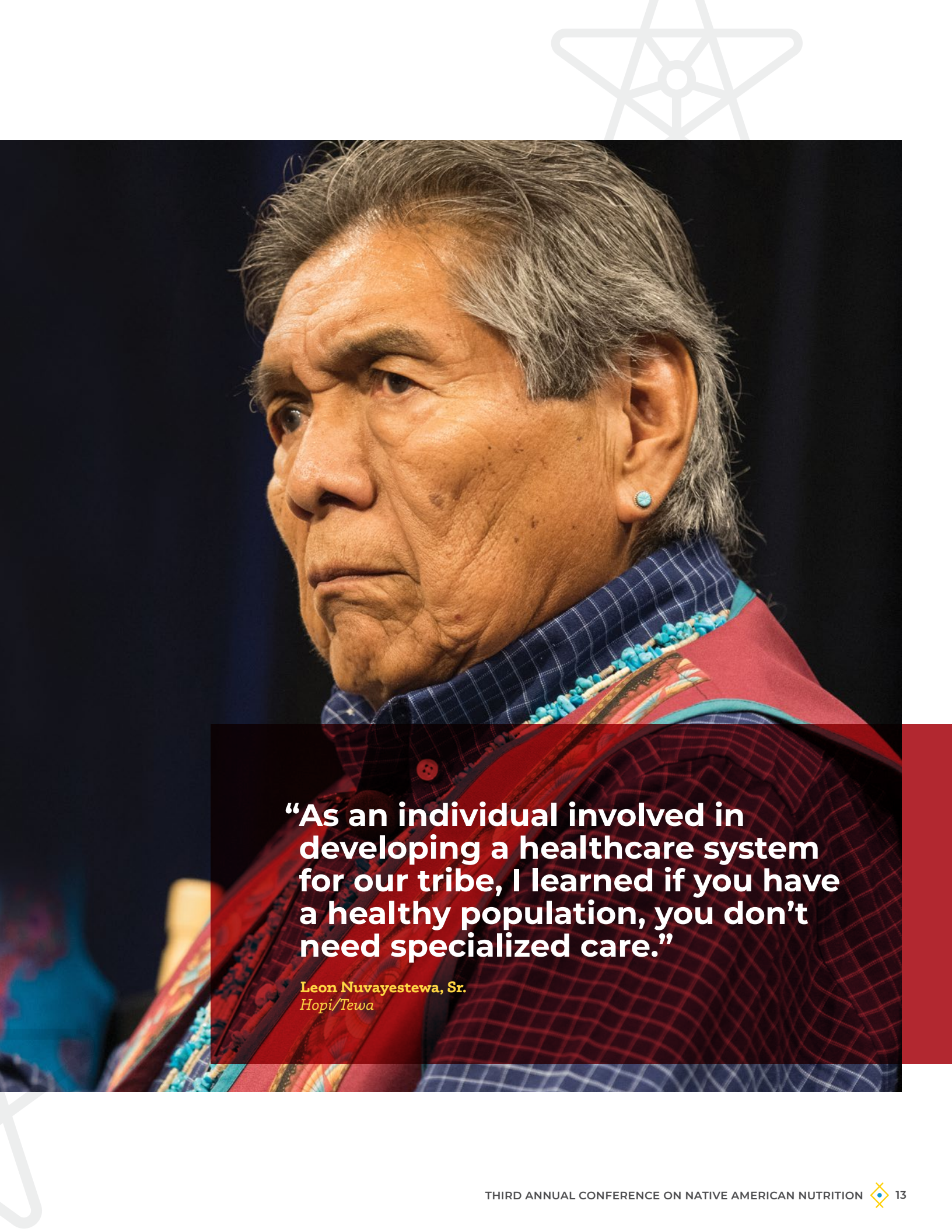
## Elder Perspectives

**Leon Nuvayestewa, Sr.**

“What changes do we need to do to make our people healthy?” Seizure of land and forced relocation of Native nations resulted in the loss of connection to food and related traditions. There is now a revival of these connections. Medicine people used psychology, ceremony and plants to heal people and maintain the community’s health. Indigenous people should sustain traditional knowledge to care for the Earth and all beings in the right way. It is a sacred responsibility. It is also important to protect Indigenous seeds — for cultivated and wild plants. Teaching families to grow, care for, harvest, sustain, hunt, and prepare traditional foods can change communities. Schools, stores, and places where people spend time should offer healthy options. Tribal communities must change their food environments, reconnect to traditions, involve the community in food-related projects, and publish work in academic journals.







**“As an individual involved in developing a healthcare system for our tribe, I learned if you have a healthy population, you don’t need specialized care.”**

**Leon Nuvayestewa, Sr.**  
*Hopi/Tewa*



## SESSION 4

# IMPORTANCE OF RECOVERY FROM HISTORICAL TRAUMA TO HEALTH AND NUTRITION

### SPEAKERS

**Donna LaChapelle**

*Ojibwe/Dakota, enrolled member of White Earth Nation*

Faculty Member, Center for Mind-Body Medicine, Washington, DC; Elder in Residence, Native American Community Clinic, Minneapolis, MN

**Mary Annette Pember**

*Red Cliff Band of Ojibwe*

Independent Journalist and past President of the Native American Journalists Association

**Karina Walters, PhD**

*Choctaw*

Professor and Associate Dean for Research; Co-Director, Indigenous Research Wellness Institute, University of Washington

**Donald Warne, MD, MPH**

*Oglala Lakota*

Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Professor of Family and Community Medicine, and Director, Indians into Medicine Program, University of North Dakota

## Epigenetic Impact of Unresolved Trauma and Poor Nutrition

**Donald Warne**



Genocidal federal policies have inflicted multi-generational, collective wounding and profound toxic stress on Indigenous people, including gene expression changes that present as neurobiological issues, social and emotional challenges, high-risk behaviors, and chronic diseases. Social determinants of health, such as poverty, inadequate housing, unreliable transportation, and remote rural locations

result in limited access to affordable, nutritious food, a significantly reduced lifespan, and widespread diet-related chronic diseases in tribal communities. Emerging science helps deepen understanding of the health impact of historical trauma,

**“Food itself can be trauma. What we don’t heal in ourselves, we hand off to our children.”**

adverse childhood experiences, and poor nutrition — all issues that significantly and disproportionately affect Native people. Strategies to increase resilience and reverse epigenetic changes among Indigenous people focus on mitigating unresolved trauma and improving nutrition. Integrating Native and non-Native ways of knowing are effective means to address these issues.

Indigenous wisdom — parenting, ceremony, culturally based nutrition, and other traditional practices — offers a systemic response to these issues and reflects positive cultural determinants of health. It’s important to substantially increase the number of Native American academic leaders, healthcare professionals, and researchers and use the best of medical science. A new doctoral program in Indigenous health, which is under development and based on principles of Indigenous health as the curricular foundation, can help grow the population of future Native healthcare professionals.



## Addressing Historical Trauma to Improve Native Nutritional Health

**Karina Walters**

Many Native people are in a state of grief; tribal communities are not fully dealing with this issue. Overfeeding and hoarding are examples of trauma responses; it's important to understand and honor these choices as a reaction to historical trauma. Social and historical inequities such as colonization profoundly affect the physical and mental health of Native people and destroy the ability to fulfill the Original Instructions as Indigenous people.

Achieving Indigenous wellness is based on three elements: power, love and vision, grounded in culture and the land. These elements — relational ways of restoring and being — help with healing from traumatic stressors and events. Traditional calendars are based on land and food. A clan-based society enables tribal people to be healthy. For tribal people, listening deeply and sitting still while hearing old stories helps with learning the Original Instructions and restore peoples' relationships to all that is. Addressing historical trauma is the first priority, followed by program implementation.

## Deconstructing Historical Trauma: Survival Stories

**Mary Annette Pember**

Sharing from her memoir about her family, this journalist and author wove family accounts of her mother's traumatic childhood and painful mission boarding school experiences with archival information about the school obtained through research. Layering these accounts and discoveries, she grounds her mother's suffering in Anishinaabe understandings of spirit, pain and healing. This poetic, compelling and tragic account conveys the intergenerational impact of historical trauma and how traditional spiritual concepts provide important interpretations of a systemic injustice perpetrated on thousands of Native children with profound personal impacts that reverberate through most tribal families.

Deeply moving family stories about boarding school, troubled marriage and domestic violence faced by the author's mother reflect a marked, emotionally laden contrast to the dry, informational content housed in mission school archives, which reveal nothing of the daily pain and lives of Native children at these schools.



**Donna LaChapelle**  
Ojibwe/Dakota

## Medicine for the Spirit: Breathing, Shaking and Dancing

**Donna LaChapelle**

Movement and meditation release trauma and intergenerational toxic stress residing in blood, bones and memory to calm the nervous system, manage pain, and return the body to good health. The audience walked through guided meditation, intentional movement, and dancing, demonstrating how these practices enable people who have experienced trauma to be present in their bodies — a key for Native people to heal from historical trauma. Indigenous people also have other important teachings and resources for healing. Elders transmit important wisdom that is passed on to children. The ancestors are always present. Sage, sweetgrass and cedar are also important. Combining these elements enables tribal people to call one's spirit into their body, restoring well-being. These are gifts for health.



## YOUTH PANEL

# HEARING FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

*A panel of young leaders from across Indian Country, living in urban, rural and reservation settings, shared their perspectives on food sovereignty, nutrition and health. Guided by elders, family members, teachers, and other community leaders, panelists described their inspirations and efforts around expanding food sovereignty and food security in Indian Country. They also identified key opportunities for interested young people and articulated some important considerations for the Indigenous food and nutrition movement to bear in mind.*

### Why Indigenous Youth Care about Food, Health and Tradition

Many tribal nations are located in USDA-defined food deserts and do not have easy access to affordable, healthy food. Given the discouraging life expectancy of Native Americans, many young people involved in tribal food and health issues are motivated change their diet and physical activity and engage in community-based initiatives designed to make important improvements to their community's food environments. The issue of limited access to healthy foods is compounded by water shortages in various locations in

Indian Country that can impact agricultural production. Focusing on the intersection between food sovereignty and land stewardship guides many doing this work. Fortunately, due to the limited access to grocery stores, many places in Indian Country still rely on key, traditional foods, as well as agricultural production including gardening, crops, hunting, fishing, gathering, raising livestock for meat and eggs, and food preservation. The availability of locally raised and prepared foods is on the rise in tribal communities.

### PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The panelists participated in a variety of community, professional and educational programs and experiences that equipped them with the knowledge, skills and networks to foster tribal food sovereignty.

- **AmeriCorps VISTA** internships related to Indigenous foods and food sovereignty may be available in tribal communities and will provide a minimal stipend and student loan forgiveness.
- **Intertribal Agriculture Council's Native Youth Food Sovereignty Alliance** is a way for tribal people to collaborate on advancing knowledge and growing networks to improve Native food systems.
- **Indian Land Tenure Foundation** provides internships to interested college students.
- **Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative** develops Native agriculture-driven curriculum and hosts a national youth agricultural leadership event for American Indians.
- **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** offers a "Culture of Health Leadership Program" for early career Native professionals interested in food and health.

**Americorps VISTA volunteers  
supported by Seeds of Native Health**



**MODERATORS**

**Electa Hare-RedCorn, LCSW**  
*Pawnee/Yankton*  
University of Arkansas

**Cindy Farlee**  
*Cheyenne River Lakota*  
Native Youth Food Sovereignty  
Alliance, Intertribal Agriculture  
Council

**PANELISTS**

**Emily Baldy** (age 16)  
*Yurok and Hupa*

**Mariah Gladstone** (age 24)  
*Cherokee and Blackfeet*

**Autumn OnlyAChief** (age 24)  
*Pawnee*

**Taj Sunio** (age 18)  
*Native Hawaiian*

**Kile White** (age 16)  
*Navajo*



**Taj Sunio (speaker)**  
*Native Hawaiian*

**STRATEGIES THAT WORK**

- Youth-led programs that teach young people how to grow, gather, hunt, fish, prepare, and preserve healthy food can support the revitalization of important traditions, transmit cultural knowledge, and improve the health of future generations.
- Integrating contemporary interests of young Native people is also helpful, engaging them in poetry, gardening, digital storytelling, food demonstrations, networking; serving healthy food and beverages; and encouraging them to drink more water.

**ADVICE**

- Native American adults need to model healthy behaviors for young people.
- Young Indigenous people should be intentionally included in food sovereignty discussions and be kept at the forefront of the work.
- Establishing intergenerational food-focused programs that involve Indigenous youth is a long-term investment in the health of the culture; they are the future leaders and parents.
- Tribal governments and community leaders need to work together to ensure that there are stores with healthy options in remote Indigenous communities.





## CONFERENCE BREAKOUTS SHOWCASE



### **Achieving Tribal Food Sovereignty: The Critical Role of the Special Diabetes Program for Indians**

**Shervin Aazami, Stacy Bohlen, Amber Torres  
and Bobby Ahern**

Food sovereignty is at the core of tribal sovereignty. Federal treaties include explicit protections for traditional tribal food systems. The Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) is a resource for tribal communities to work toward food sovereignty, with a demonstrated impact on lowering rates of chronic disease in tribal communities. The Walker River Paiute Tribe leveraged the SDPI program to bring back traditional foods, grow public health programs with an Indigenous lens, and improve the health of their people.

### **Agro Ecological Production in La Esperanza Parish, Pedro Moncayo County, Ecuador: An Alternative to Feed Our Communities**

**Dolores Lopez, Cecilia Moreta, Hilario Morocho,  
Fernando Sarango and Jose Suarez**

Indigenous Ecuadorians are experiencing a new wave of colonization via corporate imposition of agricultural monoculture and associated, negative effects on their food supply. The Intercultural Training Center on Agroecology (Centro Intercultural de Capacitación y Agroecología or

CINCA) operates a school in the Andean region of Ecuador, where children and adults learn to grow organic, traditional crops and restore soil health. CINCA demonstrates that it is possible to grow healthy traditional Quechua foods and build food sovereignty by using an Andean ancestral worldview. The program brings together youth to learn from elders, providing economic vitality for the community through the sale of the crops in Quito.

### **Alaska Traditional Foods Movement**

**Melissa A Chlupach and Amy Foote**

Two major strands of work in Alaska — improving access to traditional foods in community settings and changing state and federal policy to facilitate this access — have increased availability of traditional foods for tribal people. Healthcare and long-term care facilities, senior meal programs, schools, and donation centers that serve Native people are ideal settings to offer Indigenous foods. Under the Farm Bill, providers are now able to offer donated traditional food in healthcare facilities. Years of work with municipal and state leadership also resulted in changes to the state food code designed to facilitate consumption of moose and seal. At Utuqqanaat Inaat (A Place for Elders) Long-Term Care, serving traditional foods to elders has brought physical and spiritual healing, exemplifying the impact of these efforts.



**Building healthy Native nations should be based on a cultural strategy that integrates our languages, traditional knowledge, and the foods and related practices that maintained our health.**

## **American Indian Perspectives on Healing from Historical Trauma: An Indigenous Inquiry**

**Renee Beaulieu-Banks, Kyra Christopherson and Kim Sundeen**

Historical trauma is the tragic foundation of health issues facing Indigenous people today. Merging Indigenous knowledge, understanding of historical trauma, and Western research methods help surface Native perspectives on healing from historical trauma. Numerous approaches based on these elements can facilitate healing, such as talking circles — an effective Indigenous method to process, share, and move through trauma-related issues. These dialogues can foster a commitment by younger people to Elders to protect and carry forward ancestral teachings. Incorporating the gathering, preparation and consumption of traditional foods and related protocols and practices offers the opportunity for purpose, connection and collective healing. Integrating an Indigenous perspective as a driving paradigm for research is critical to move academic inquiry.

## **Community Champions for Safe, Sustainable, Traditional Food Systems**

**Casey Neathway and Kathleen Yung**

Honoring traditional foods is a key pathway to health and wellness, part of Indigenous peoples' self-determination around what foods they can eat and access. Food preservation is one component, connected to broader issues of food systems, food sovereignty, and nutrition. Community-led approaches to programming are an effective way to cultivate resilient Indigenous food systems. A canning cohort program for tribal communities in British Columbia reduces barriers to food preservation and bridges non-Native and Indigenous food preservation knowledge. A train-the-trainer model and province-wide mentoring network ensures knowledge is disseminated and sustained across many communities.

**Our traditional foods and knowledge grow healthy Indigenous nations.**





## **FDPIR: Changes that Have Paved the Way for More Nutritious “Commodity” Foods**

**Florence Galabaza, Carmen Robertson and Akua White**

The United States Department of Agriculture’s Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) now offers new, healthier foods, including blue corn meal, bison, wild rice, and salmon, to Native American households. Formerly known as the “commodities” program, FDPIR is intended as a supplemental source of food for low-income families but can be the primary source of food for many. A Choctaw Nation nutrition educator teaches community members how to prepare healthy meals using commodity foods offered at their site, including recipe sharing and food demonstrations.

## **Growing the Puna: Insights to Building an Indigenous Māori Nutrition and Physical Activity Workforce**

**Erina Korohina and Hannah Rapata**

Growing the Puna is a workforce development program for Māori students at Auckland University, in nutrition, dietetic, and physical activity studies. The program design encourages students to combine academic learning with traditional, community-led approaches focused on healing from historical trauma; rebuilding community connections; and improving the overall health of whanau (family). Students are guided by a mātauranga Maori worldview and complete a 10-week research project co-designed with community.

## **Lessons from the Traditional Western Apache Diet Project**

**Twila Cassadore, Letitia McCune and Seth Pilsk**

For 28 years, San Carlos Apache tribal staff have gathered and documented ancestral knowledge from elders about the natural world, focusing on the traditional diet. This powerful partnership with Apache elders has generated series of books featuring traditional names of animals, trees, plants, a wild food harvest calendar, a series of Indigenous food posters, and a traditional Apache parenting curriculum. Preserving this traditional knowledge about health and nutrition surfaces Indigenous approaches to addressing current epidemics of chronic disease, suicide, substance abuse, and malnutrition.

## Leveraging Programs to Support Maternal and Child Health and Food Security

**Kelli Begay and Patty Keane**

SNAP-Ed funds are a lesser known, useful resource to support Indigenous-centered programs on food insecurity and maternal and child health. Tribal leaders in New Mexico use SNAP-Ed funding from the (CHILE) Plus initiative, incorporating Indigenous knowledge on traditional foods, health, and language preservation. These educational efforts offer intergenerational learning about health, nutrition and food access.

## Nutrition Across the Lifecycle, an Applied Model of Nutrition Education at Taos Pueblo

**Paula Szloboda**

This experiential nutrition education program uses a “farm-to-fork” model for all children at Taos Pueblo tribal schools. Intergenerational learning through cooking and gardening events connects elders to youth. Adaptable nutrition curricula meet the unique needs of communities, offering hands-on learning to build knowledge around growing, preparing and sustaining traditional foods for all tribal members, from expectant families to elders.

## RETURN: Native American Women Reclaim Foodways for Health and Spirit: A Short Documentary Film

**Mary Paganelli and Valerie Segrest**

RETURN conveys hope and inspiration by sharing stories of six women from six different tribes who lead community-based initiatives to restore health, well-being, and cultural heritage. Reclaiming ancestral practices helps rebuild connections between traditional foods, health, spirituality, wellness, and resilience. RETURN is available for screening to communities and organizations.

## The “Food Wisdom” Repository: Information Resources for Native Nutritional Health

**Julie Davis, Dixie Dorman, Derek Jennings, Michelle Johnson-Jennings, Meg Little and Koushik Paul**

Under development, “Food Wisdom” is an online database providing a wealth of information and resources about Indigenous food, health and well-being. Created and hosted by the University of Minnesota’s Research for Indigenous Community Health Center, it will feature content from academic, applied, experiential, and tribal community sources. This project received funding from Seeds of Native Health.





## PECHA KUCHA SHOWCASE



*Pecha Kucha speakers gave rapid-fire presentations highlighting innovative work across Indian Country. Moderated by Sarah Miracle, RDN, LD, MBA, FAND (Chickasaw Nation). Pecha Kucha presenters are marked with an asterisk.*

### **Ocean to Table**

**Azure Boure\***

Science meets culture when marine biology students follow a salmon's journey from ocean to table — by catching, cleaning, smoking, and canning salmon in the traditional way. Making traditional food is a step toward food sovereignty and preserving ancestral practices.

### **Significance of Traditional Wild Plant Nutrition for Tohono O'odham Health**

**Juanita Francisco Ahil and Martha Ames Burgess\***

Nutritional lab analysis and an elder's traditional knowledge of nutritious, sacred desert plants reveal their unique healing properties for diabetes. Traditional harvesting methods, ceremonial practices, and consumption of these plants sustain family, social and cultural well-being.

### **Newman's Own Foundation Native American Nutrition Cohort: A Peer Learning Collaborative Approach to Strengthen Fresh Food Access and Nutrition Education in Indian Country**

**Crystal Echo Hawk and Faith Fennelly\***

A peer learning collaborative provided nutrition education and fresh food access for communities across 12 tribes. Participants shared their work as change makers with each other and funders.

### **Revitalizing Traditional Foods as Nutritional Food Options**

**Rebecca Edler\*, Dolly Potts\* and Adam Schulz\***

Research and education at College of Menominee Nation focuses on soil health, Indigenous agriculture methods, traditional stories and protocol, heritage seeds, uses of the plant, and a community feast to celebrate the harvest.



## Achieving Campus Wellness through the Integration of Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition Education at United Tribes Technical College

**Robert Fox, Brian McGinness\*, Alice Wadsworth\* and Mara Yborra\***

A tribal college farm teaches Indigenous agriculture to learners of all ages, including seed care, spiritual traditions, and food sovereignty. Food service staff are trained to prepare and serve these traditional foods for the campus.

## Northwest Tribal Food Sovereignty Coalition: Intertribal and Intergenerational Collaboration

**Nora Frank-Buckner\*, Jenine Dankovchik, Ethan Newcomb, Tam Lutz\*, Victoria Warren-Mears and NW Tribal Food Sovereignty Coalition Members**

A regionally specific, intertribal and intergenerational coalition promotes collaboration on tribal food sovereignty efforts. Examples include a Native “Chopped” competition, where chefs prepare Native foods, and plant education programs for youth.

## The Role of Soil Nourishment in Nutritional Quality of Indigenous Foods

**Anna Eichner, Scott Goode\* and Beverly Ausmus Ramsey**

An educational program teaches organic strategies for soil improvement to participants who range from youth to master gardeners. Using traditional knowledge, participants learn about companion planting, animal relatives, and soil health practices.

## Healthy Navajo Store Initiative

**Janine Hood\*, Danya Carroll, Carmen George and Sonya Shin**

The Healthy Navajo Store toolkit offers recipe cards, proposed samples of healthy foods and beverages, and posters for use at clinics and 80 Navajo Nation stores to promote local, healthy, and Indigenous foods.

## Blackfeet Nation Community Food Security and Food Sovereignty Assessment

**Scott Brant, Stefany Jones, Marissa McElrone, Kirsten Krane, Betsy Loring\*, Sharon Silvas and Nonie Woolf**

More than half of the Blackfeet Reservation community experiences year-round food insecurity. In response, the tribe’s Agricultural Resource Management Program established a food pantry, basic food skills education, a commercial kitchen, and community café.

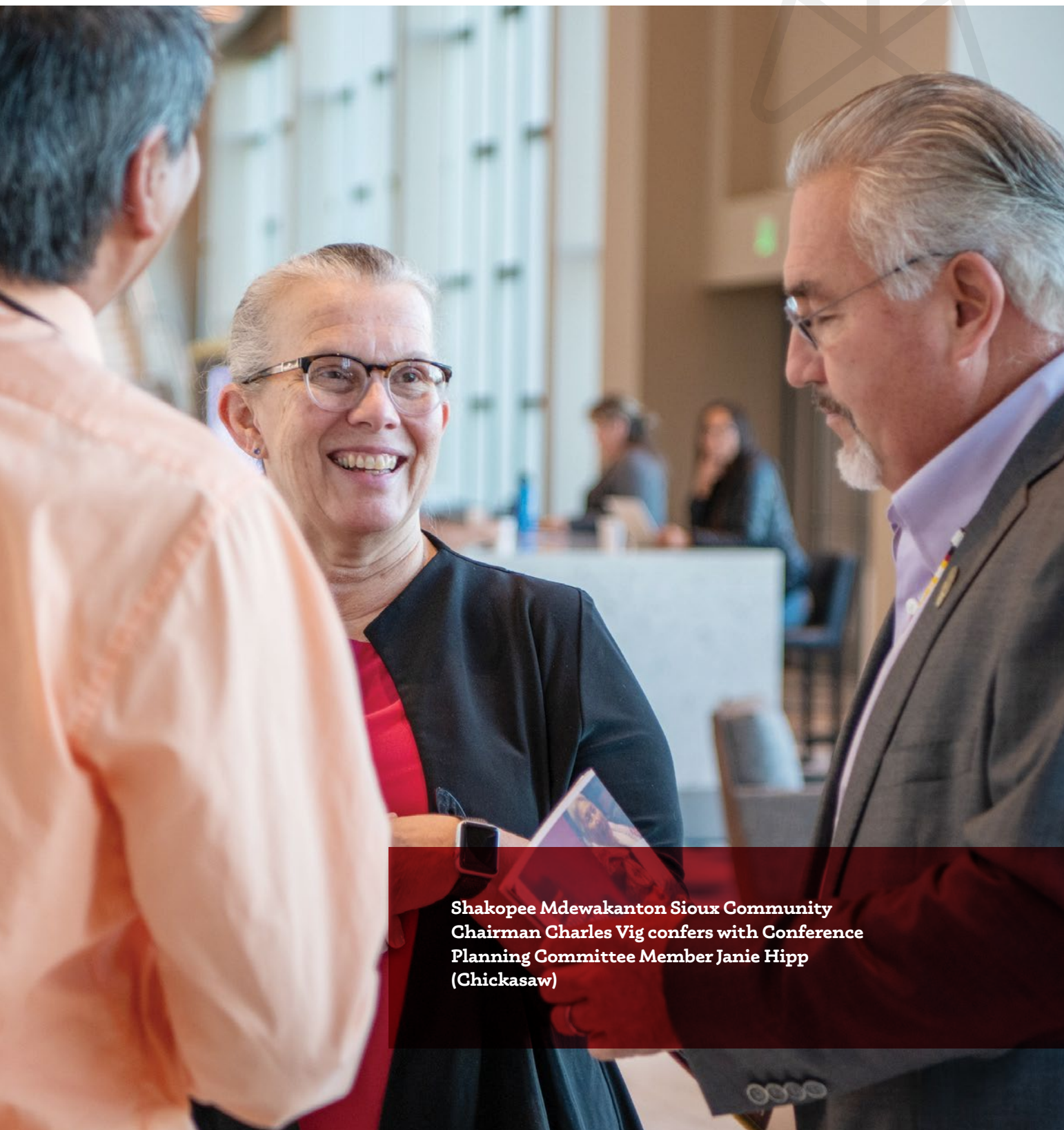
## Converting Food Deserts into OAASIS

**Beverly Ausmus Ramsey\***

OAASIS (Organic Adaptive Agricultural Systems Integrated for Sustainability) is an indoor agroecosystem designed to improve community food security. Solar power and continuous harvest provide nutritious foods to areas with limited food resources.



**Aura Leticia Teleguario Sincal**  
*Maya Kaqchikel*



**Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community  
Chairman Charles Vig confers with Conference  
Planning Committee Member Janie Hipp  
(Chickasaw)**





## ELDER PERSPECTIVES

# SHARING ELDER WISDOM

*A panel of elders shared their insights at the close of the conference, including Hope Flanagan (Seneca), Evangeline Nuvayestewa (Hopi/Tewa), Leon Nuvayestewa Sr. (Hopi/Tewa), Beverly Stabber Warne (Oglala Lakota) and Ernie Whiteman (Northern Arapaho).*



**“It is the Indigenous way  
to honor everyone.”**

**Beverly Stabber Warne**  
*Oglala Lakota*

### TEACHINGS


#### ✦ LEARNING AND CHANGING

Hope is important to healing from historical trauma — there are many people doing good work, which can help us feel hopeful. A communal way of thinking can also help us rethink and redo things that build resilient tribal nations. Merging knowledge traditions makes another positive difference for our communities. It is important that this work be led and conducted by Indigenous people. There are always lessons to learn.

#### ✦ PRESERVING AND SPEAKING OUR LANGUAGES

Knowing our traditional languages is important to our future. Much of our Indigenous wisdom is embedded in our language. Learning, speaking and teaching our languages and transferring our traditional knowledge can only occur by sitting together, listening and learning. We cannot do this by reading.





“In a communal way of thinking, there are thoughts going toward the same way. We have to build our community in that way. A community is who you are. Look at yourself as a seed. Now you have to plant that seed. You are all going to be a plant. You are going to go back to your community and plant more seeds. Other crops will come up because you have shown people what to do.”

**Ernie Whiteman**  
*Northern Arapaho*

“Learning language is so important, because there is so much in the language. When you speak in your traditional language you have to change your perspective.”

**Hope Flanagan**  
*Seneca*



“Our work is never going to be done, until we are laid to rest like the corn.”

**Evangeline Nuvayestewa**  
*Hopi/Tewa*

✦ **TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS GUIDE AND EMPOWER**

The Creator will show us things if we are committed to traditional religion and practices. We must honor the ancestors by learning, practicing and teaching these ways to the next generation. Our traditional names give us power. Our strong traditions are meaningful; hardship can also be an important teacher. Indigenous people must always treat elders well and honor others.

✦ **PLANTS ARE RELATIVES AND GIFTS**

Take time and listen to the plants. Every single plant has its gift. Respect its gift, and it will come closer. They understand our old languages, then they come closer when you give them that gift. If we don't see, respect and engage with plants, they will go away because they are not needed.



# Welcome to the

Third Annual Conference on

# NATIVE AMERICAN NUTRITION

 HEALTHY FOODS,  
HEALTHY LIVES INSTITUTE  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



Seeds  
A Campaign

FOR MORE INFO ON PAST & FUTURE CONFERENCES & TO  
WATCH VIDEOS OF THIS YEAR'S PRESENTATIONS VISIT

[seedsofnativehealth.org/2018conference](http://seedsofnativehealth.org/2018conference)







## CONCLUSION

The Third Annual Conference on Native American Nutrition welcomed a larger audience than the previous two years, with participants from across the globe including South America, North America and New Zealand. Conference organizers introduced a variety of new content, including pre-conference workshops, more breakout and plenary sessions, and panels of elders, youth and intergenerational family members. As always, the event provided participants and speakers the opportunity to connect and explore together how traditional Native knowledge and academic research can support, blend and complement efforts to strengthen Indigenous food systems and food sovereignty; transmit important knowledge about food and health across generations; nourish tribal people throughout their lives; and understand and promote healing from historical trauma. Keynote speakers, panels, workshops, breakout sessions, poster sessions, film screenings, focus groups, resource tables, and networking time provided a rich learning environment for everyone, while delicious Native food nourished participants.

## 2019 CONFERENCE

Our fourth conference will take place on **September 15-18, 2019** at Mystic Lake Center in Prior Lake, Minnesota. We hope to see you there and that you will bring along other newcomers to share, learn and engage with so many leaders undertaking important work to advance Native American nutrition and health.



## Conference Planning Committee

Mindy S. Kurzer, PhD (Chair)  
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*University of Minnesota*

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Seeds of Native Health  
A Campaign for Indigenous Nutrition

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