

New Mexico Tribes

A registered dietitian in New Mexico presented a nutrition project as a fundraiser for American Indian schools. The project offered nutritious alternatives to the usual sodas and candy. It featured yogurt, trendy flavored milk drinks, "blizzard" drinks with fruits and low-fat milk and ice. The school fundraiser was a huge success, making more profit than ever.

Zuni Pueblo of New Mexico

Perhaps the most successful program in the literature was the Zuni Diabetes Program (Weber, 1998). The study had well designed evaluation measures, including physiological measures such as BMI, as well as food logs that tracked consumption of sugared beverages that showed a significant reduction in soda consumption, accompanied by an increase in glucose/insulin ratios. A key point to take away from this intervention is that the individuals receiving health education were also exposed to an environment that continually supported the decision to make healthy behavior changes. For example, diet (or unsweetened) beverages and water replaced sugar sweetened beverages in vending machines; and access to recreational facilities was provided. The project provided palatable water in coolers for students in several school locations. This allowed a consistent message of health promotion to become a part of the daily routine. Within two years, Zuni high school students had decreased BMI, decreased consumption of soft drinks, increased consumption of dietary fiber, and increased glucose/insulin ratios; therefore, achieving the program's goal of decreasing the risk of diabetes. This study provides a clear model of an effective intervention. (Weber 1998)

The Zuni Pueblo Special Diabetes Grant Program (SDPI) initiated a community wide campaign "Drink Zuni's Own Water!" in Fall, 2005. As of January 03, 1125 water carafes – each 2 gallon container individualized with Zuni stickers – were distributed to community families, and individualized water bottles for all the Zuni schoolchildren and Zuni teachers. At community events, they distribute water carafes with their Zuni Pueblo designed logo to families, to promote drinking of water (instead of sugary beverages) by families at the family dining table, and chilled water in the refrigerator as healthy choice for children and families. (Source of information and contacts: Chetna Mehrotra, Epidemiologist CDC assigned to direct the Zuni Special Diabetes Grant Program. Other key staff at Zuni involved in the project: Dr. Tim Naimi, MD, HP/DP Director for Zuni, and Dr. Eric Coontz, DDS, Dental Officer at Zuni.

Three years ago, Zuni Pueblo Utility Department invested \$ 7 million in a new water plant and installing replacement water pipes in many of the tribal communities, in a successful effort to improve the quality of the water. The water now has no sulphur smell or odor, is clear, clean, good water. There is still a perception from previous history that the Zuni water is not good quality; so many people still buy bottled water and sodas. April-May 2005, Zuni Diabetes Program staff gathered data on community member's perception of the water – and reached over 500 people with a 12-13 item questionnaire. They have also marketed their program through the tribal newsletter, in a question-answer handout, distributing the water bottles and water carafes at no cost to community members. February – April 2006, the project staff will conduct another survey to identify knowledge, attitudes and behaviors influenced by the Zuni Water Project.

They purchased the 2 gallon water carafes from Culligan (not filtered carafe, because the water now at Zuni is high quality), at the discounted price of \$3.66/carafe; significantly less than the cost for 1 carafe at \$6.00.