

Running Medicine opens spring season in ABQ

BY MICHAEL STOCKER
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

ALBUQUERQUE — Not long after sunrise Saturday morning, a small group began to form on the lawn behind the University of New Mexico School of Law.

As the assembly grew, a palpable electricity born of collective excitement, curiosity, and anticipation thawed the crisp desert air. The individuals and families represented every age group and the full array of Central New Mexico's diverse walks of life; yet, those gathered coalesced around the opening circle that is a staple of each Running Medicine event.

This was the scene at the opening to Running Medicine's spring season. By the end of practice 90 minutes later, 105 people greeted each other in a closing circle having enjoyed the opening ceremonies of the eight-week long season.

"There was a lot of spiritual

connection, positivity, and energy from opening prayer, throughout the walk/run, and at the closing circle," said Shannon Fleg who is Naasht'ezhi Tahaahá born for Kinyaa'anii and the Native Health Initiative Partnership Director of the season opener.

Running Medicine, now entering its second year as a part of NHI's suite of health-centric programs in Albuquerque, was founded on the idea that running and exercise is a beautiful and potent medicine for the mind, body, and spirit. The family-oriented gatherings invite runners and walkers of all ability levels to seek the medicine of the body's most natural movements.

Running Medicine has drawn from many generous organizations, such as local groups Wings of America, Heart & Soul Sports, and Southwest Youth Services, with the common goal of achieving a safe, inclusive environment for healing and community to thrive.

Theresa Clay who is Ashiilhi born for Tódich'i'nii, and is the Health Promotion Disease Prevention coordinator for the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service as well as a member of Running Medicine's founding team, has watched the program grow tremendously over the last year from a small group of motivated community leaders. Now, it has grown into practices averaging over 70 participants and a youth team that saw 13 members reach the highest level of competitive youth running at the USATF cross country national meet.

Clay sees the program's philosophy of "being active and encouraging others to promote a healthy lifestyle without judgment" as key to its success. A representative from Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry's office was present and the Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez hoped to make the opening, but was delayed



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Runners and walkers of all ages prepare for each practice with a dynamic warm up and stretches.

as he was running a trail race himself that morning.

The Spring 2017 season of Running Medicine will run through May 7, meeting Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6 p.m.

at the UNM North Golf Course and Saturdays at 9 a.m. at the Bosque School track.

Registering for membership costs \$15 and includes a team T-shirt, free or discounted

entry to a number of running and racing events for adults, youth, and much more.

Information: www.lovingvice.us or Running Medicine Albuquerque Facebook page

NAPI introduces local farmers to alfalfa cultivation

SHIPROCK — On March 6, NAPI coordinated with Alfalfa Seeds and Eastern Colorado

The open discussion allowed the audience to inquire about NAPI's farming techniques,



our crop."

Yazzie elaborated on hay quality between the four different cuts that are common

says, "We're not there for the seed purchases, we provide services to ensure that NAPI acquires from us