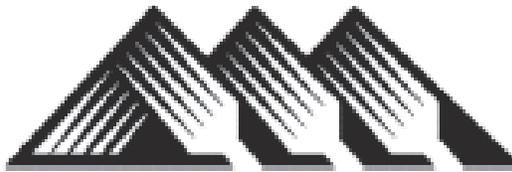


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November 2007

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the 11th issue of our 2007 campaign on ***Eating Together, Playing Together***. This issue focuses on the wisdom of American Indian traditions in food and fitness. Our nutrition handout is about **traditional Crow foods**, while the fitness handout covers **traditional native games**.

Governor Brian Schweitzer and the 2005 Montana Legislature provided funding for the 1972 Constitution Indian Education for All (IEFA) by including it in the definition of quality education. This constitutional, ethical, and moral obligation is intended to enrich the education of both Indian and non-Indian students. According to State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Linda McCulloch, recognizing the distinct cultural heritage of American Indians will enable all students to lead Montana into a better future. For more information, visit www.opi.mt.gov/indianed/

To celebrate November as **Native American Heritage Month**, **Eat Right Montana** honors Montana's 8 tribal governments with a brief exploration of traditional approaches to physical activity and food. We are grateful to two women for sharing their time and wisdom for this month's newsletter:

DeeAnna Leader, Executive Director of the **International Traditional Games Society**, helps to research, resurrect, and restore tribal games from the pre-European period. The Society's Blanket, a symbol of elder's sanction, now carries over 60 games from more than 20 tribes. Visit www.traditionalnativegames.org/ for more information. Ms. Leader can also be contacted at leader@3riversdbs.net or 406-226-9141.

Crow healer **Alma Hogan Snell** is well-known for her presentations and writing on native recipes, plants, and medicinal herbs. Mrs. Snell wrote ***A Taste of Heritage*** (Bison Books 2006) and ***Grandmother's Grandchild*** (Bison Books 2001) and is featured in ***Traditional Foods: A Native Way of Life***, a video available for purchase (\$14.95) through MSU Extension Publications at (406) 994-3273 or orderpubs@montana.edu

Healthy Families packets are made possible with generous support from agencies, organizations, and individuals. Please join us in thanking the 2007 sponsors listed on the left. **This month, we would like to welcome and give special thanks to our most recent sponsor: Montana's Comprehensive Cancer Control Program.** If you use this packet and can make a donation to support positive, practical messages for families, please contact ERM Chair Katie Bark at 406-994-5641 or kbark@mt.gov

Crystelle Fogle 406-947-2344

Katie Bark 406-994-5641

Mary Ann Harris 406-994-5397

Learning About Traditional Games

These games help youth understand the responsibilities of adulthood and provide connections to their kin, band, and tribe.

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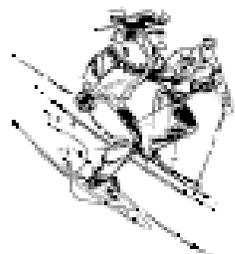
★ Run and Scream

Players start running, sucking in a big breath of air. At a designated mark on the ground, they start screaming while continuing to run. As they run out of breath and the scream is finished, the spots are marked with a sharpened, 4-inch stick in the ground. Players attempt to pass the other marks; the one who runs the longest distance while screaming is designated as the winner.



★ Wheel Game

Played by boys and men, this is similar to darts. Players use a spear-like stick and a round target made from a bent willow branch with a bull's eye of rawhide. One player rolls the wheel along the ground; another stands about 15 feet away and throws the stick at the wheel. The closer the stick comes to the bull's eye, the higher the score. If the stick goes through the bull's eye, the thrower wins.

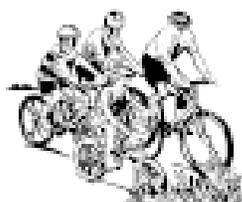


★ Line Tag

This girls' game has been popular with all people. A line is made with as many people as want to play. The goal is for the first person to tag the person at the end of the line. Everyone holds hands tightly, helping (or hindering) the first person's attempts to tag the last person. When the tag is made, the next person at the front becomes the tagger, and the tagger moves to the end of the line.

★ Ring the stick

A hoop of green willow is attached to a stick with a length of rawhide. For small children, the hoop has a 7-inch diameter; for older ones, it is smaller (4 inches). The hoop is placed on the ground; then swung upward. As it comes down, the player tries to put the end of the stick through the hoop. The players take turns and the one with the most rings after a certain number of turns is the winner.



★ Stone People Game

This game teaches respect to the stone people. There are 2 players and 2 judges. Each player has 3 river stones, which players and judges set up and remember at the starting line. Players pick up one stone at a time and race to the finish line. Each stone needs to be placed in the same order as at the start. The stones at the finish line cannot clink when placed, as this is disrespectful to the stone people.



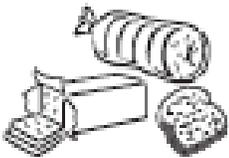
EAT RIGHT MONTANA

Healthy Eating

Learning About Traditional Foods

The information about these foods comes from the words of
Crow teacher and healer Alma Hogan Snell.

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★ Prairie turnip and cattails

Prairie turnip was a “bread food” for the Crow people. The part of the root that you eat is small, about the size of an egg. It can be eaten fresh or it can be dried, braided together, and stored over the winter. When dried turnip is ground, the flour can be used to make porridge, a thickener for stews, or bread. Cattail roots can also be ground into flour, while the tender stalks can be diced into salad.

★ Wild greens and other plant foods

Native peoples enjoyed many wild greens and other plants, like all parts of the versatile cattail plant. Although we call some of them “weeds” today, Indian lettuce, dandelion greens, salsify, yucca, and watercress, as well as wild carrots and onions, were all eaten in a variety of ways. They were sometimes enjoyed raw where they were picked. Other times they were cooked into stews with meat.

★ Berries and other fruits

In Crow country, nature provided an abundance of fruit throughout the summer. First came the juneberries (in July). Last were buffaloberries, which ripened after the first frost of autumn. In between, people enjoyed chokecherries, raspberries, elderberries, plums, strawberries, huckleberries, currants, and cactus fruit. They tasted sweet, were easy to preserve, and provided needed nutrients.

★ Bison and other meats

The buffalo, or American bison, has always been important to the Crow. Before life on the reservation, tribes followed and hunted the buffalo across the plains. Today, buffalo is still respected and served for special occasions, like wedding feasts. Traditionally, all parts of the animal – from lungs to hooves – were eaten. Deer, antelope, elk, moose, and smaller animals, like rabbits, were also eaten.

★ Water and traditional teas

Water has always been the traditional drink of Crow people. The elders taught that rivers were the veins of the world. They told us to respect the waterways and to thank the Creator every time we take a drink. Cool, clear water from creeks is good for the body. Juices from berries and teas, especially teas from the plants of the mint family, were also a tradition among the Crow people.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

EATING TOGETHER, PLAYING TOGETHER
Celebrating Healthy Families 2007

November 1, 2007

Sharing the Healthy Wisdom of Traditional Lifestyles

Learning to respect American Indian traditions is a valuable way to improve health and prevent disease in modern times. Traditional approaches to food and physical activity involved children and adults eating and playing together in ways that taught important lessons and provided amusement at the same time. Tribal teachers emphasize that a whole way of living is the path to health and that the healthiest lifestyles combine traditional wisdom with today's technology.

"Learning the old ways impacts all aspects of life," says DeeAnna Leader, Executive Director of the International Traditional Games Society and former college Physical Education instructor. "When we teach traditional games at a school or on a reservation, we see wonderful interactions among multiple generations. However, the games teach much more than fitness through the lifespan – they have a positive impact on other critical issues, like the drug, alcohol, and suicide prevention."

The International Traditional Games Society utilizes past practices of educating Indian youth for mental, physical, social, and spiritual survival in the modern world. Recognizing the importance of youth learning survival skills from older tribal members, the Society's clinics provide:

- Recommended procedures for researching and restoring traditional games
- Connections with advisors, teachers, and coaches who use games to educate modern youth
- Certification and permission to teach over 60 games that have come into the traditional games' blanket with permission for all people to play
- Knowledge to enhance goals for healthy lifestyles, family fun and humor, connections with values of the past, social skills, and connections to spirit

The Society's website (www.traditionalnativegames.org/) has details and contact information.

In her writing and speaking, Crow healer Alma Hogan Snell also draws on knowledge and wisdom from past generations. In her most recent book, ***A Taste of Heritage: Crow Indian Recipes and Herbal Medicines*** (Bison Books 2006), Mrs. Snell talks extensively about looking to the natural world in both sickness and health. In outlining her healing philosophy, she writes: "A healthy life is built from the inside and includes prevention of illness. To Indians, food and medicine are largely the same thing. Good foods have healthful properties that are both preventative and healing. If you eat right and exercise, you should stay healthy and not need any 'cures'."

When asked about teaching healthy choices to children, Alma Hogan Snell again emphasizes the importance of role models and of learning by doing. As she learned from the lessons taught by her grandmother, the legendary medicine woman Pretty Shield, she believes that children need to be coached into positive choices. She suggests a gentle approach based on getting people together to taste foods: "You have to tell them of the potential they have, guide them, be with them for a while, and get them to try things on their own. When they do something right, tell them."

Past and current issues of Eat Right Montana's monthly packets can be downloaded free at www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm

A handout of recipes from Northern Plains tribes is also posted online with the November packet.