

Diabetes Conference!

On March 25, 2004, members of the community and Health Department staff attended a diabetes conference called, "Discovering Healthy Pathways Together". It was sponsored by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and held at the conference center of Foxwoods Resort Casino in Connecticut. The keynote speaker was Elaine Miles from the TV series "Northern Exposure". The breakout sessions offered were "Know Your Numbers: The ABC's of Diabetes.", "REZ-ROBICS", "Restoring Balance Through Our Traditions: Using the 4 Winds Nutrition Model", "How Diabetes Affects Your Mood" and "Diabetes: It's a Family Affair".



Elaine Miles talks about her family's experience with diabetes and positive ways to take care of one's health.

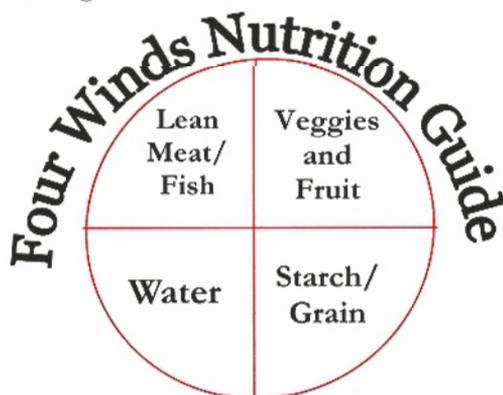
At "Know Your Numbers: The ABC's of Diabetes" and "Diabetes: It's a Family Affair" sessions, the facts about diabetes, the importance of regular blood sugar testing, and family support and involvement were reviewed. "How Diabetes Affects Your Mood" was led by Lisa Sockabasin RN, MSN, a Passamaquody from the North American Indian Center in Boston. Lisa said, "Diabetes and depression go hand and hand. It is very common for a diabetic to become depressed. It is also important to get help." She reviewed the symptoms of depression, such as feeling sad, anxious, worthless, helpless, restless and irritable often. Feeling not interested in hobbies or activities that were once enjoyed, and appetite and/or weight changes are also symptoms of depression.

"REZ-ROBICS" was a wonderful workshop that got everyone up and moving! It was led by Pam Belgarde and Reggie Mitchell, both Native Americans that designed this exercise program for Native Americans. The exercises in their program are based on Pow Wow dance steps set to modern Native music. They made a set of exercise videos that is free for all Native Americans. One can be sent to you for free by sending a self-addressed, stamped box or envelope to: Well Native Productions, 1168 Quail Court, Merced, CA 95340. It is a set of two video tapes, one which is a comical way of discussing ideas to improve your lifestyle to manage diabetes. The other tape is the REZ-ROBICS exercise program. Madeleine Martin also has a copy of these tapes to borrow at the Health Center.

The workshop entitled, "Restoring Balance Through Our Traditions: Using the 4 Winds Nutrition Model" was led by Kibbe Conti, a registered dietitian and member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe from Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Kibbe discussed the **4 Winds Nutrition Model** that she and the Tribal Elders of her tribe designed. This model "promotes restoring balance through a diet that reflects aspects of the traditional way of eating", she says. The model is based on the Medicine Wheel. She says that she has found that, "promoting eating in a way that is consistent with the many aspects of earlier food patterns is more valuable than using a national nutrition model such as the Food Pyramid Nutrition Guide." Kibbe consults with tribes to develop their own guide, based on this model, using their tribe's traditional foods. For example, some foods Penobscots would include are fish and game, berries, corn, potatoes, and fiddleheads. Everyone agrees that this was a great conference!



Kibbe Conti is explaining the Four Winds Nutrition Guide.



In a balanced meal, no food group dominates the plate.



Pam Belgarde and Reggie Mitchell use kickboxing techniques in REZ-ROBICS!