

APRIL 2019

# ACCELERATING ACCESS

ISSUE 23

ROLE MODEL — SEE BACK PAGE



## 2019 SEPA AND YES PROGRAMS

Dr. Maurice Godfrey, Professor and SEPA Program Director

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the newest member of our SEPA/YES! team. Aislinn Rookwood joined us on March 1 as the new YES! Program Outreach Specialist. Aislinn has hit the ground running, in fact, she was off to meet students in South Dakota on her first day on the job. Aislinn will be helping to establish YES! Clubs for middle and high school students so that we bring lessons about cancer biology and prevention to our partner schools. Aislinn Welcome!



Ms. Aislinn Rookwood, MPH

As the academic year comes to a close we are looking forward to the many summer activities for teachers and students that will be part of our SEPA and YES! programs. We have been asked by NIH to establish a new and intensive academic enrichment and research experience program for high school students. It is because of all of your trust in our partnership that we were asked. Thank you and stay tuned for details.

Finally, after almost a year and a half of planning *Wakanyéja: A Conference on American Indian Behavioral Health* will take place at the University of Nebraska Medical Center on April 23 and 24. It is not too late to sign up if you are interested. Please let us know at [sepa@unmc.edu](mailto:sepa@unmc.edu) by Monday April 15, 2019.

Have a great SEPA and YES! Summer!

Learn more about our programs:  
Visit our website - [www.unmc.edu/sepa](http://www.unmc.edu/sepa)

### Newsletter Committee

- Shrawan (Sam) Kumar
- Maurice Godfrey
- Kim Soper
- Liliana Bronner

## SEPA PROGRAM: MARTY INDIAN SCHOOL VISIT 2019

**SEPA PROGRAM:** We have held annual workshops, science camps, family science nights, and visits to schools to stimulate interest in science, provide guidance and science education to Native American communities since 2005. SEPA team Dr. Godfrey and Dr. Kumar recently (April 5th, 2019) visited Marty Indian School. Students show great enthusiasm and were very much inspired about our science through this fun program. More than 60 students participated in all day fun-science hands-on-activities related to Energy and Heat transfer. Heat transfer is an important concept that is readily evident in our everyday lives yet often misunderstood by students. In the hands-on-activities, **shown in the pictures**, students learned the scientific concepts of temperature, heat, and heat transfer through con-





## SEPA Program at Elkhorn and Millard North Schools, NE

Students currently in school or college will enjoy opportunities as a result of scientific advances in genetics and will be asked to solve novel dilemmas on how genetics will be used in medicine and in society. Exploring the social and ethical issues while examining the key scientific principles makes for a learning opportunity that engages students and prepares them for the very real decisions they will face in the near future. SEPA team Dr. Godfrey engaged students in discussions of ethics and personal genetics through an interactive ethics game as shown in the pictures. Students were excited to learn different genetic options to choose for their children. Combining both schools, more than 80 students took part in the activities. Besides ethics game, Dr. Godfrey also presented a DNA DAY program. The pictures show students involved in extracting DNA from strawberries. Visualizing the DNA was a great excitement and learning experience for them.





## SEPA— CONFERENCE, MEETINGS ETC.

### 2019 Great Plains Conference: April 23-24, 2019, Omaha, Neb.

The health of a tribe can be measured in the vitality of its people, but perhaps more so in their spiritual wellbeing. The diverse paths people take to health can lead to new ground in discussions of American Indian health.

Join us for a conversation about American Indian behavioral health in April 2019 in Omaha, Nebraska.

**Wakanyéja: A Conference on American Indian Behavioral Health** will bring together tribal community members, respected elders, health advocates, academics, biomedical scientists, and tribal health representatives to help better understand community issues and work to address health disparities. More than a dozen conference speakers will engage with these issues from multiple view points, including physical, mental, cultural, and spiritual factors in behavioral health.

Significant and lasting change can only happen when those who represent indigenous communities engage with one another to support cultural traditions alongside biomedical research and clinical practice. This conference is intended to bridge the gap between academics, scientists, physicians, and the communities impacted by behavioral health issues.

Topics include how behavioral health issues develop, health services, policy, and health behaviors including youth risk and protective factors.

**Wakanyéja Summary:** American Indian peoples have always known that mental wellbeing is an integral part of physical and spiritual wellbeing. And when one aspect suffers, the rest will too. It is no secret that indigenous nations have suffered as a result of colonialism and systemic racism. Genocide and assimilation have left wounds in every indigenous community. There may be differences when it comes to languages, dances, regalia, and ceremonies, but common ground has always been found in the core values, resilience, and harrowing history.

“Wakanyéja: A Conference on American Indian Behavioral Health” brings together tribal community members, respected elders, health advocates, academics, biomedical scientists, and tribal health representatives to help better understand community issues and work to address health disparities – all issues directly related to the wounds of the past.

More than a dozen conference speakers will engage with these issues from multiple viewpoints and disciplines, including: physical, mental, cultural, and spiritual factors in behavioral health. It is the hope that this conference will actively engage all participants in conversations that bridge the gap between health professionals and the communities impacted by behavioral health issues. Speakers will address the relationship between historical trauma and behavioral health; spiritual resilience and the ceremonies, traditions and belief systems that have survived through the centuries that continue to sustain indigenous people; and how current policies and health services work or don't work within these systems to address them. The audience will be invited to engage in open dialogue, share stories and listen deeply.

It is vitally important for those who are not indigenous to hear from those who are, because, as Vine Deloria Jr. wrote in his critically acclaimed book, “God Is Red,” – “Within the traditions, beliefs and customs of the American Indian people are the guidelines for society's future.”

This conference is a collaboration between the Center for Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska and the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

# WAKANYÉJA

## A Conference on American Indian Behavioral Health

### SPEAKERS

RUBY GIBSON



Ojibwe/Digala Lakota, Executive Director of Freedom Lodge  
For 35 years, Gibson has been dedicated to Historical Trauma recovery.

CHARLES SITTING BULL



Digala Sioux, Director of Behavioral Health for Indian Health Service, Pine Ridge Hospital  
Sitting Bull has served as a provider/therapist, EAP director, child welfare director, and more.

FAY GIVENS



Mississippi Choctaw/Cherokee, Executive Director of American Indian Services (Michigan)  
Givens is part of the committee that advocates on behalf of American Indians at the UN.

LANCER STEPHENS



Wichita/Muscogee (Creek), Director of Special Populations Outreach and Assistant Professor of Research in the Department of Health Promotion Sciences, College of Public Health at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

JOSEPH MARSHALL III



Rosebud Sioux, Writer / Actor  
Marshall has appeared in television documentaries and served as technical advisor for movies.

LARRY VOEGELE



Standing Rock Sioux, Chief Executive Officer at Ponca Health Centers at Omaha  
Voegelé has served as the CEO of the Health Services Division of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, with several locations in the region.

KAY MCGOWAN



Mississippi Choctaw/Cherokee, Adjunct Prof. of Anthropology/Native American Studies, Eastern Michigan University  
As a political activist, McGowan is involved with several Indian-related organizations.

MELISSA WALLS



Anishinaabe, Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Biobehavioral Health at the University of Minnesota Medical School at Duluth  
Walls' research focuses on physical and mental health issues.

DONALD WARNE



Digala Lakota, Director of Indians into Medicine; associate dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of North Dakota.

MAGDA PECK



Adjunct Professor of Public Health and Pediatrics at the University of Nebraska Medical Center  
Peck is a seasoned strategist and facilitator, educator and storyteller.

JENNIFER GIROUX



Rosebud Sioux, United States Public Health Service  
Giroux has provided public health leadership to the Northern Plains Tribal Epidemiology Center since 2003.

TIM MCGOWAN



President and Founder of Networks of Support  
McGowan conducts prevention and peer leadership workshops that focus on increasing connectedness.

FRANK LAMERE



Winnebago, activist  
LaMere has been recognized most recently for his work to stop the illegal flow of alcohol from Whiteclay, Neb., onto the dry Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

NORA BOESEM



Founder of Roots to Wings, South Dakota  
Boesem is a social worker effective at working with clients and families who may be in crisis, including from alcohol issues.

OMAR ABDUL-RAHMAN



Director of genetic medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center  
Abdul-Rahman's research focuses on fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and technology to help diagnosis.

Registration and full bios: [unl.edu/plains/2019-symposium](http://unl.edu/plains/2019-symposium)



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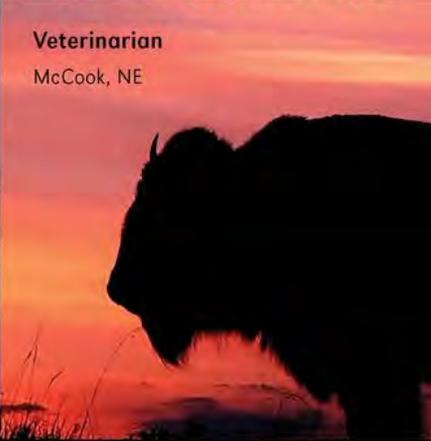
## Role Model Poster

The Role Model Poster Project features Native Americans in many health and science professions. Each poster includes the name, photograph, and tribal affiliation of the person featured. Additional information for teachers include: education, benefits, motivation, special job skills, and words of wisdom. These posters proved to be a great source of inspiration and motivation to the students and teachers. There are currently ten sets of posters and each set features five tribal members. The set number 10 has just been released.

# WAYNE WATKINS



**Veterinarian**  
McCook, NE



**PINE RIDGE / OGLALA LAKOTA**

**WORDS OF WISDOM**  
"Treat people the way you want them to treat you.  
Know that money is not the only measure of success."

<p><b>EDUCATION</b> B.S., Chadron State College M.D., Veterinary Medicine, Ohio State University</p>	<p><b>MOTIVATION</b> I have always been interested in the sciences, but was intrigued by the variety offered in veterinary medicine after doing some outreach work while I was in graduate school.</p>
<p><b>BENEFITS OF THIS CAREER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnosing illnesses in animals</li> <li>• Performing surgery on an animal to make it better</li> <li>• There is always a variety of things to do and animals to see in a day of work</li> </ul>	<p><b>SPECIAL JOB SKILLS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having compassion for people and their pets</li> <li>• Being able to have the patience to listen to a complete history of the animal and its symptoms</li> <li>• Communicating your diagnosis and treatment regimen in a way that every client can understand</li> <li>• Ability to juggle your life around the demand of the career</li> </ul>





## ANNOUNCEMENTS/ UPCOMING EVENTS/NEWS

1. **BOARDMEETING**: : Marina Inn (Delta Hotel) in South Sioux City, Nebraska **APRIL 12, 2019** Time: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
2. **WAKANY É JA: A Symposium on American Indian Behavioral Health** **April 23 and 24, 2019.**
3. **SEPA Summer Health Science Fun Camp at Omaha—June 3-5th, 2019**
4. **Yes Teacher workshop at UNMC—June 24-26, 2019**
5. **SEPA Teacher Workshop at UNMC—June 26-28, 2019**

Email us with your questions at [sepa@unmc.edu](mailto:sepa@unmc.edu)

### SEPA Publication - *The Power of Role Models*

THE ROLE MODEL POSTER—SET 9 WHICH INCLUDES SOUTH DAKOTA HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WAS RELEASED IN 2018

THE SET OF ROLE MODEL POSTER 10 HAS JUST BEEN RELEASED

**Information about the Native American Role Model Poster sets is available on the web at:**

<https://nativeamericanrole.wixsite.com/rolemodels>

**SEPA PROGRAM NEWS:** South Sioux City Ambassador Conference 2017 was organized by SEPA and BHECN . This can be viewed now on YouTube—here is the link :

<https://youtu.be/RDVW5W6WLwU>

Historic trauma, contemporary tribal issues and the opportunity to create positive change were the focus of the daylong conference.

