



September 2021

Dear Communities,

The VIVA Connects team hopes that you are all doing well, and finding ways to safely enjoy activities outside. This newsletter has been designed to easily provide the most current and accurate health information to you all, so that you may keep yourselves and your communities safe. Please feel free to share this information with community members and loved ones.



Cancer Prevention during Pregnancy and Childhood

Did you know that different factors from even before birth through the first few years of childhood can have an impact on a person's chance of developing cancer later in life?

Research indicates that parents and caregivers can take steps to protect the long-term health of babies and children.



Ways that Pregnant Mothers can Reduce Cancer Risk for their Unborn Child

- ◆ Taking folic acid before and during pregnancy.
 - [Folic acid](#) is a B vitamin that can help prevent major brain and spine birth defects of the baby.
 - Talk to your health care provider about prenatal vitamins and supplements that can help keep you and your unborn baby healthy.
- ◆ Avoid alcohol and tobacco use while pregnant.
- ◆ Try to reduce your stress as much as possible.
 - High levels of stress hormones may cause the mother to experience high blood pressure and increase the chances of having a premature infant with a low birthweight. This can make it more difficult for the baby to grow and develop at a healthy rate.

Ways that Caregivers can Reduce Cancer Risk for their Newborn

- ◆ Breastfeeding.
 - [Breastfeeding](#) is the best source of nutrition for most infants.
 - It can also reduce the risk for certain health conditions for both infants and mothers.



Low rates of breastfeeding add more than \$3 billion a year to medical costs for the mother and child in the United States.

Breastfeeding Is an Investment in Health, Not Just a Lifestyle Decision

Benefits for Infants

Infants who are breastfed have reduced risks of:

- Asthma.
- Obesity.
- Type 1 diabetes.
- Severe lower respiratory disease.
- Acute otitis media (ear infections).
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Gastrointestinal infections (diarrhea/vomiting).
- [Necrotizing enterocolitis \(NEC\) for preterm infants](#)



Benefits for Mothers

Breastfeeding can help lower a mother's risk of:

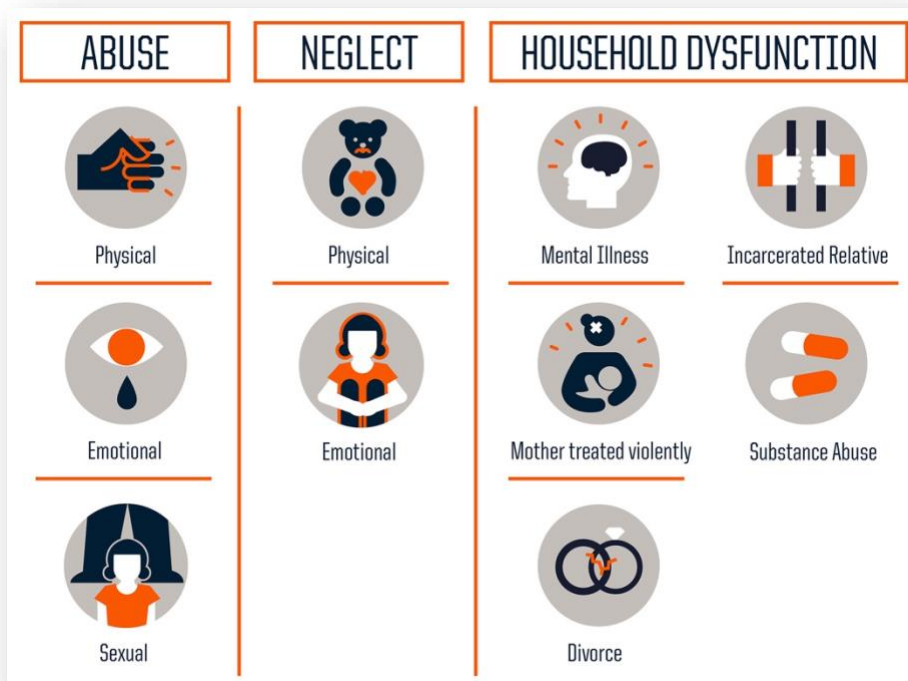
- High blood pressure.
- Type 2 diabetes.
- Ovarian cancer.
- Breast cancer.



- ◆ Making sure your baby gets enough [physical activity](#) during childhood.
 - Toddlers and children aged 1 to 5 years should be **physically active for at least 3 hours a day.**
 - Playing with your baby, especially supervised floor play in a safe environment, is great for their brain and body development.



- ◆ Raising your baby in a [safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments](#) helps that child feel loved and comfortable.
 - ACE's ([adverse childhood experiences](#)) can lead to many poor health outcomes in adulthood.



- ◆ Keep children away from [secondhand smoke](#).
 - Exposure to tobacco smoke can lead to lung cancer and secondary health issues in adulthood.



For more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dpcp/prevention/childhood.htm>

Community Highlight: Crownpoint Youth Corps and Sponsors Visit Cuba Trails

Youth and their sponsors from the Navajo Nation summer youth program, Office of Dine' Youth, Crownpoint, NM, visited the VIVA--Step Into Cuba project in Cuba, New Mexico. Their visit came as part of their summer Youth Corps work and the K'E Community Trails project to build a new walking trail in Crownpoint.

The youth group and their sponsors, Leonard Perry, Crownpoint Chapter Vice-President; Jimmie Toledo, Jr, Youth Corps leader; and Daniel Vandever, K'E' Community Trail Steering Committee Chair were welcomed by John Hennard, USFS Cuba Ranger District Administrator and community members Dr. Richard Kozoll and Dr. Sally Davis. Introductions were followed by an overview of the plan for the day that included the history of Step Into Cuba and the importance of trails to physical and mental health.



Richard Kozoll leading the group along the Fisher Trail

The group then travelled to the Fisher Community Trail that was built by local volunteers on donated land. The group hiked the mile to the trail junction with National Forest land. They stopped at various points along the trail to learn about erosion control; transporting and installing benches, signs, and kiosks; environmental concerns; wildlife; cultural assessment and protection; events held on the trail such as a full-moon hike; and had their many questions answered. This was a great opportunity to learn about building, using, and maintaining a community trail like the one they are constructing in Crownpoint.

The group returned to the US Forest Service (USFS) office and picnic area for lunch where they learned about trails and their role in economic development in the Cuba from Carey Beam and Carmen Campbell co-ambassadors for the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) and local leaders of CDT Gateway Community outreach activities in the area. Carmen shared a personal story about her daughter working in Youth Corps projects for the USFS each summer as she completed her Bachelors and Masters Degrees to become a kindergarten teacher. Paul O. Martinez, West Zone Supervisory Forester told the students about the path to a career as a forester, sharing his own story of getting a degree in biology while attending Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico.



Above: Step Into Cuba motivational walking signage.

Left: Youth Corps with Paul Martinez Supervisory Forester

After lunch the group walked Cuba’s new surfaced trail and met Cuba Council Member and Mayor Pro Tem Gilbert Dominguez at St. Francis of Assisi Park. Councilman Dominguez explained the process involved in turning a rough dirt path into an 8-foot-wide, one mile long paved trail around the perimeter of the park. He shared the challenges as well as the success of building a surfaced trail that is enjoyed by local citizens and visitors alike for outdoor recreation. Dr. Davis discussed data collected by VIVA-Step Into Cuba that showed a large increase in park trail use upon completion and noted that the increased use continued during the COVID pandemic.



The final visit was to Cuba's newly re-routed segment of the Continental Divide Trail (CDT). The CDT is referred to as one of the Triple Crown of Hiking Trails – the others are the Appalachian Trail and Pacific Crest Trail - in the United States. The group learned how this new segment of the CDT was re-routed in response to local efforts to have the trail completed and located closer to Cuba for economic, health, and recreation purposes. The group was able to enjoy one last hike for the day. Now the entire group can say they have hiked on the CDT. Bragging aside, the views were spectacular and the streams full of water from recent rains were refreshing. The day's activities closed with everyone receiving a VIVA bag of small gifts (water bottle, lip balm, lanyard, VIVA cap, postcards, and material about some of the places they had visited during the day.

*-Story provided by Sally Davis
VIVA Team and Prevention Research Center Director*

Stay safe, mask up, and get outside!

Sincerely,

The VIVA Connects Team

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