

# RUNNING MEDICINE 2023

ANNUAL REPORT



**PREPARED BY:  
JESSICA BEGAY**





# MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER

2023 was a shift of perspective on what it means to move. I find the quote, **“Exercise is a celebration of what your body can do, not a punishment for what you ate” (Quotee unknown)** to be fitting of the past year. We’ve had approximately 100 celebrations where RM-ers showed up – the most important, and sometimes most difficult step – and focused on their “now” moments of movement. We reminisced on the “good ‘ol days,” whether it be going down memory lane and recalling our easy speeds in our teen years, or moments of getting our medicine with running royalty; but, we’ve realized how we’ve advanced in speed, distance, strength, or dedication compared to ourselves one year ago. That is what we celebrated together.

Additionally, we’ve seen our youth thrive at USATF events, **added All-Americans to our list, hosted our second cross country meet, hired three new part-time RM staff, represented at local community events, moved with special guests of honor, and shared much laughter and smiles together.** I have been honored to help lead the program and get to know it’s community more intimately, and I only hope that the next coming year will be just as exciting.

This document serves as snapshot of the RM Communities as a whole, and their year of celebrating movement. Please enjoy!

**JESSICA BEGAY**  
NHI RUNNING MEDICINE PROGRAM  
MANAGER



# FRAMING MOVEMENT AS MEDICINE TO BUILD COMMUNITY

For over 8 years now, Running Medicine (referred to as RM, a program of [Native Health Initiative](#)) has focused on movement as medicine and has brought our unique program to communities around New Mexico.

**Our mission is empowering families and communities to greater mind, body, and spirit through movement.** We accomplish this by instilling our core values in each of our programs and communities. Through them, we've seen individuals and families come together in love, support, and health.

## Running Medicine Core Values:

- Inclusive to all people, all fitness and ability levels
- Provide high quality, individualized coaching to all participants at minimal cost
- Loving community where everyone supports each other's wellness
- Intergenerational – youth, elders and everyone in between!
- Emphasize the elements of “fun” and “play” in all that we do together
- Cultural, mental and spiritual aspects of running/walking will be emphasized
- Sustainability – our goal is zero waste
- Outreach to local communities and efforts to create cultures of wellness

The most memorable moment to see all of the values in one movement celebration would be that with our dear friends, Julian Nunez and his family—outstanding members of our Albuquerque community— who provided us with a Capoeira demonstration.

He generously shared his culture with us and the history of Capoeira, as it originated as a way for slaves to disguise fight practices. Despite the history, it is now a beautiful form of movement that can be easily done by almost anyone – regardless of skill or ability.

The image below shows **our largest Monday Movement** (celebrations were all core RM gather to celebrate movement) **with over 125 attendees!** Our participants are truly intergenerational, ranging in age from 4 years to over 65. It was great to have both adults and kids together for this one activity, displaying our sense of fun and emphasis on play.



# COMPLETE RM PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Based on registrant information, we had **over 1,188 registered participants** over the year of 2023. This does not include special guests and visitors. This page is a collective summary of our participant demographics. For the sake of our program, we are only interested in collecting Ethnicity, Tribal Affiliation, and Age. Visual Representation may be found on the following page.



**Map of existing 2023 RM Programs.** Core Programs include: RM Albuquerque (ABQ) Downtown\*, RM ABQ Westside\*, and RM Acoma/Laguna. RM Partnership Programs are RM Zuni (under Zuni Youth Enrichment Program) and RM Algodones (under BPS, Algodones Elementary School).  
 \*\*We ended the year with interest, an application submitted by, and a group visit to Crownpoint IHS!!

## ETHNICITY

**INDIGENOUS / NATIVE AMERICAN:** 672  
**HISPANIC:** 72  
**WHITE:** 199  
**BLACK:** 11  
**ASIAN:** 24  
**OTHER (INCLUDES NON-DISCLOSED, MIXED, PERSIAN, OR JEWISH):** 32

## AGES

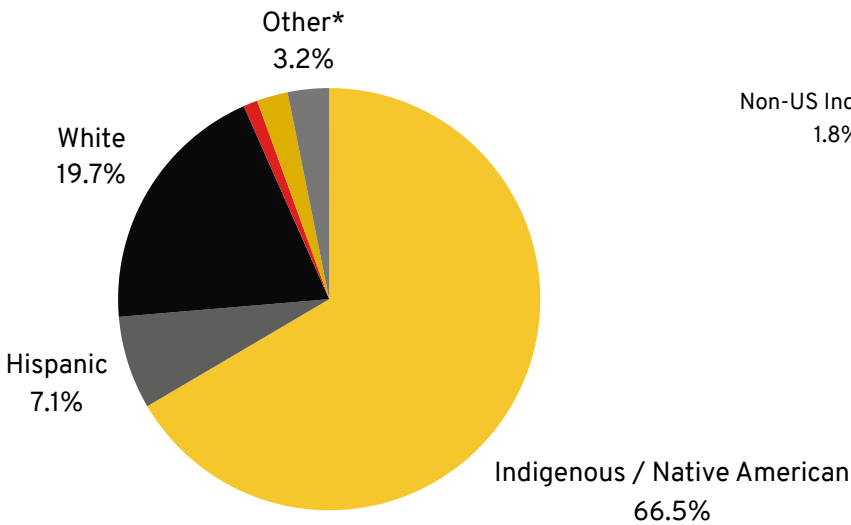
**< 18 YEARS:** 542  
**19-29:** 66  
**30-40:** 163  
**41-50:** 132  
**51-60:** 62  
**> 61:** 68  
**NOT REPORTED:** 78

## TRIBAL AFFILIATIONS

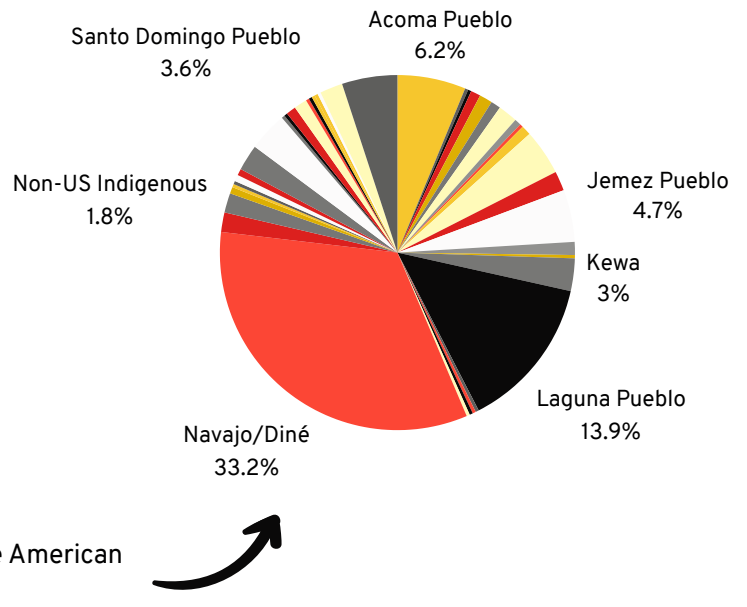
**U.S. Federally Recognized Tribes:** Acoma Pueblo, Blackfeet, Cherokee, Cheyenne Reiver Sioux Tribe, Chippewa Creek, Choctaw, Cochiti Pueblo, Delaware Nation, Gila River Indian Community, Hopi, Isleta Pueblo, Jemez Pueblo, Jicarilla Apache, Kikapoo, Kewa, Laguna Pueblo, Menominee, Mescalero Apache, Mimbres Apache, Muscogee Creek, Navajo/Diné, Oglala Lakota, Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, Otoe, Rosebud Sioux, San Felipe Pueblo, Sandia Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, Santo Domingo Pueblo, Seminole, Shoshone, Standing Rock Lakota, Taos Pueblo, Tlingit, Unknown, Ute, White Earth Ojibwe, Zia Pueblo, and Zuni Pueblo.  
**Non- U.S. Indigenous Tribes:** American Polynesian, Nandi, Kelenjin, Maya, Honduran, Raramuri Huixhol, and Wiikwemkoong First Nations.

# VISUAL DEMOGRAPHICS

## ETHNICITY

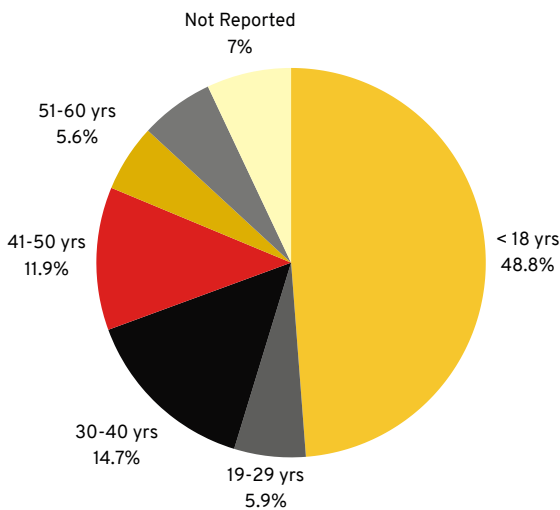


## TRIBAL AFFILIATIONS



\*The term "Other" includes non-disclosed, mixed, Persian, or Jewish. The smallest slices refer to Black and Asian.

## AGES



## DEMOGRAPHICS SUMMARY

The majority of our participants are Indigenous /Native American. Of those, **we serve Indigenous community members of 40 U.S. Federally Recognized Tribes, and 7 non-U.S. Tribes. 13 of which are representative of the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico.** The full list of tribal affiliations can be found on the previous page.

Almost half of our participants are RM Youth! Ages of our RM youth range from 5 to 18 years of age. Our "young adult" generation population ranges from ages 19 to 29 years of age (6%). The majority of our adult population is between ages 30 to 50 years of age (total of 26.6%).



**80%** \*

saw increase in their own physical activities, discipline to build cardio endurance, and mental well being

**70%** \*

enjoyed the kindness, positivity, and support of the community and its leaders -- especially the HIIT sessions

\*per most recent 2023 survey results

# VOLUNTEERING WITH RM KEEPS GROWING!

To bring together more loving service volunteers, RM offered its first “Volunteer Interest Run” for Fall 2023 where those who were curious about what it means to be a part of the RM volunteer team, gathered for a Sunday run through the bosque – bagels were provided. Potential volunteers got a chance to meet past volunteers and casually learn about what it meant to be a leader.

Collectively, our volunteers averaged to **about 30 volunteers per 10-week season** in total. Volunteers were dispersed throughout our three service categories: adult coach, youth coach, or logistics. **A handful of our volunteers were even gracious enough to dedicate their time to more than one area!**

## WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE RAVING ABOUT

“...everyone is meeting for a common goal, I feel that greatly contributes to the success of Running Medicine. Open collaboration and forward thinking between the coaches and leaders made this season successful. With such positivity and inspiration from the coaches and leaders, it is encouraging for participants to continue making RM successful.”

“..[volunteering for] RM has been extremely helpful to my physical, emotional, and mental wellness. RM has helped me get out of the house and be apart of a team/family again. RM has restored my sense of purpose..”

“Being around the kids, helping them get better. They pushed me on my runs”





# RM IN THE COMMUNITY!

RM has been receiving attention from the Albuquerque community and organizations have reached out for event collaboration throughout the year. Here is an account of events from the Fall 2023 season.

- Red Ribbon Relay, Pueblo of San Felipe Project Venture Program
- Capoeira Demonstration, Julian Nunez
- Kids Cook! Demo (x2)
- Jog with a Dog, Pitties and Kitties Rescue of New Mexico
- Sports Medicine Clinic, UNM School of Medicine - Sports Medicine Fellows (x2)
- Urban Indigenous Education Summit, APS/ NACA/ UNM
- UNM Kiva Club Prayer Run, UNM Kiva Club
- NM United Soccer Clinic, Somos Unidos Foundation
- UNM Diabetes Education Meeting, UNM Diabetes Education Department
- Pueblo of Santa Ana Health Fair Run, Pueblo of Santa Ana
- Radio interview, Albuquerque 99.9 the BEAT
- Algodones Community Run, Algodones Elementary



RM spent Indigenous People's Day 2023 with Somos Unidos Foundation and the New Mexico United Team

# RM YOUTH THRIVED AND REPRESENTED AT USATF EVENTS!

## SNAPSHOT

Total number of RM Youth: 542

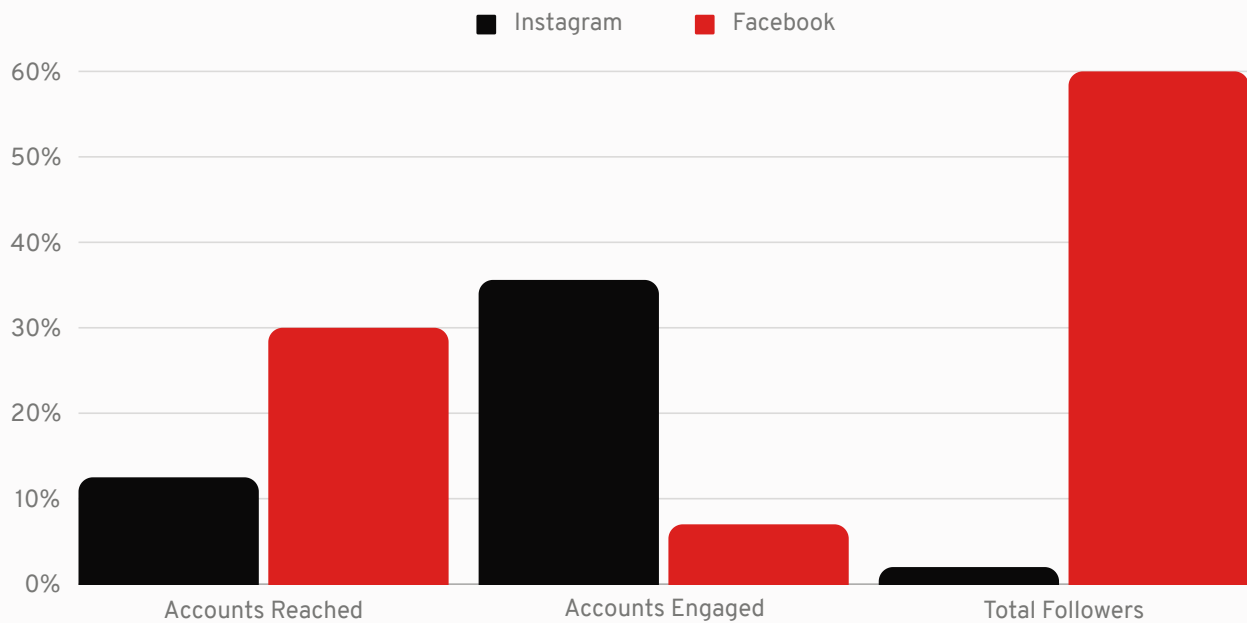
Participated in Spring USATF: 43

Participated in Fall USATF: 85

## NOTABLE MOMENTS

- 6 youth traveled to Eugene, Oregon to compete in the 2023 USATF Junior Olympic Track & Field National Championships in July.
- 30 youth runners traveled to Louisville, Kentucky to compete in the 2023 USATF Junior Olympic Cross Country National Championships in November. **3 were added to our RM All-American list. We now have 10 total in our 8-year history!!**
- 4 youth were selected to participate in the 2023 indigenous Games in Nova Scotia





**Table 1. Percent changes to social media accounts from May 2023 - December 2023.** Overall, social media increased. Engagement was highest with Instagram account. Following increased the most with our Facebook account. Our Facebook account has been reaching over 5,000 accounts as of today (January 2024), as compared to reaching between 400-600 accounts back in May 2023. Exact numbers are shown below. Our Instagram has been reaching about 1000 accounts per day.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Beginning of Fall 2023, we started to incorporate social media by following the three social media rules:

- Creating and sharing relevant content, researching relevant hash tags
- Posting consistently, weekdays around common lunch and break times
- Tagging friends and using relevant hashtags to increase discovery: **#albuquerque #runningnm #runningmedicineabq #movementismedicine**

In summary, our social media has played a key role in our success this past year, and should be a main focus this next coming year.

## INSTAGRAM (@RUNNINGMEDICINE)

**Accounts Reached:** over 12.5% increase

**Accounts Engaged:** over 35.6% increase

**Total Followers:** over 2% increase

**Current:** 2.2K Followers

## FACEBOOK (FB: RUNNING MEDICINE)

**Accounts Reached:** < 30% increase

**Accounts Engaged:** < 7% increase

**Total Followers:** < 60% increase

**Current:** 2.7K+ Followers



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many of our events this would not have been possible without the love and support of our RM, NHI, and Albuquerque community. This page *only names a few* of those who have helped us with their time and energy (and sometimes monies) spent.

## INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS

- Native Strength Revolution
- Wings of America
- Native Women Running
- Notah Begay III Foundation
- Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
- Zuni Youth Enrichment Project

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- Pitties and Kitties
- KidsCook!
- Bernalillo Sheriff Department

## BUSINESSES

- Gatorade
- Bike and Coffee
- Southwest Healing Massage
- Agri-cultura Network: Community Supported Agriculture
- Sport Systems

## MEDIA

- Edible New Mexico Magazine
- 99.9 The Beat

## CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

- ABQ Parks and Recreation
- ONE Albuquerque
- Mayor's Office

## RUNNING / FITNESS ORGANIZATIONS

- Heart & Sole
- Runners for Public Lands
- Renew Earth Running

## SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

- Native American Community Academy
- Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
- Central New Mexico Community College
- University of New Mexico
- University of New Mexico Health Sciences Campus, and several of their departments

## SPECIAL GUESTS

- Thomas Valles
- Tashina Red Hawk, Miss Indian World 2022
- Kat Herrera Jenkins
- Julian Nunez and family
- Jenelle Roybol, govener of Pojoaque
- Dr. Elizabeth J. Kistin Keller, Albuquerque's First Lady
- Dr. Doug Zeidonis, UNM HSC
- Somos Unidos x New Mexico United Team

*Thank You*

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# CRITIQUES AND OUR RESPONSES

Although we try our best to bring the best possible experience to our participants, especially to those who dedicate their time and energy as one of our volunteers, nothing is perfect. However, we are working our best to improve the overall program and we take all critiques very seriously. This page is our collective responses to our received critiques and how we intend on addressing these issues in 2024.

## FROM & TO OUR PARTICIPANTS

The great news is that at **60% of our survey say that little to no improvement is needed!** Areas that could use improvement are to have better communication of upcoming events and possibly longer seasons. We know that communication is always important, and one of our goals this next year is to implement a one-way text messaging system in addition to emails and social media posts. We recognize the emailing system (Benchmark) has not been able to send our emails to 100% of our RM emailing list (over 1.5K recipients). To help with that, we've increase social media postings as soon as we know of changing information. We are also aware that not everyone has access to social media, and we are hoping a one-way text messaging system will be able to help us in this area. For events communication, we are also becoming more diligent with our own organization and planning ahead of time. This will help us get word out faster.

## FROM & TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

A big critique we received from our volunteers would be to increase volunteer support and certification, and to provide guidelines. We wholly agree and one thing we are looking into is providing specific training during our February 2024 RM Leadership Retreat. A guideline, in addition to NHI's Loving Service Volunteer Expectations Form, should also be included and we will work on writing that out to have before the annual Leadership Retreat.

**50% of our volunteers plan to volunteer again** as an RM leader, and 30% are unsure. Some are unsure because of the environment, and those have been addressed and will be continued to be maintained by increased presence of RM Program Manager at the various sites, and to spread out other leaders and coordinators when appropriate.

This year, our goals are to increase volunteer numbers and create a better community environment for them.

## REVEIING OUR CORE AND PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

IN 2023, we took some time to review both our core and partnership programs in regards to inclusion with the RM communities and their perks. We noticed that lack of partnership program participation in events and incentives was an area that requires attention on our end. Immediately, **current MOU's were revised and are in review process with signees.** Improvement to MOU's for our partnership programs include: options to maintain own volunteer, or have NHI oversee volunteers; adjusted fees based on the number of participants, inclusion on \$20 shoe sale, inclusion on incentive race submission, and increased in-person visits and support by RM.

Other critiques were breaking the exclusivity of "RM Albuquerque" and making that available for all RM groups. Albuquerque, in a sense, is RM Headquarters and, although other programs are also RM, all programs are responsible for how they provide RM to their communities. However, **we are working to bring more of RM Albuquerque's specific events to other RM communities** – such as HIIT, Yoga, local incentive races, social events, etc. We hope this next coming year, we can build and strengthen our overall RM communities via internal program collaboration. In 2024, RM will be hiring an RM Outreach Coordinator. This person will be key to help use ensure that the essence of RM and program equality is existing between all groups.

# CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, we had a lot of great things happen this past year! And, as always, there's still room for improvement – but **we thank all of our RMer's for their kind words and input, as well as their patience as we address our critiques this next year.**

2023 was a great year of smiles and miles, and we are so thankful to be a part of each and every RMer's journey. It's always encouraging that as the seasons end, it's also a time of reflection of how far we've come despite the test and trials that were thrown our way. We especially love to hear how RM played a role in that because it helps us to know that we're not alone and, here at RM, we have a rooted, loving, and supportive family that will help pick us back up when we need it.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION



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### SOCIAL MEDIA



FB: Running Medicine



@runningmedicine

