

Standing Tall for 50 Years:

Honoring Community Health Representatives, 1968-2018

The Traditions of Gratitude Series



Sam English®



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention



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The Standing Tall for 50 Years image celebrated the extraordinary contributions of Community Health Representatives (CHRs). The Indian Health Service CHR Program was established in 1968 to bridge cultural, language, and system gaps between people and health resources. Fifty years later, CHRs continue to “stand up” for their people, acting as advocates and providing social, spiritual and physical support. Today, over 1400 tribally employed CHRs serve their communities. Many CHRs have served continually since the program began. While the CHR program itself spans 50 years, the role of natural helpers to whom communities turn for help and support is as ancient as indigenous communities themselves.

This image, one of three in the Traditions of Gratitude Series, was developed to honor traditional wisdom and evidence-based science portrayed through culturally relevant messages promoting health, diabetes prevention, and diabetes care. The three images honor CHRs, Diabetes Talking Circles, and the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). CHRs and Diabetes Talking Circles provide support and education that make a positive difference for people living with diabetes. In 2001, the DPP, with 3,234 participants, including 171 American Indians, confirmed that type 2 diabetes can often be prevented or delayed by adopting a lifestyle of active, holding talking circles, and engaging CHRs can help people live well with diabetes and prevent type 2 diabetes in their communities.

The poster is a print of an original water color created by Anishinabe artist, Sam English, renowned for his colorful and spiritually-inspired imagery. As an artist and activist in public health and social justice, Mr. English has been an outspoken advocate for sobriety in the substance abuse prevention movement in Indian Country. Diagnosed with diabetes in 2001, Mr. English did not know until creating these images that there was hope for diabetes prevention and the prevention of complications due to diabetes. Mr. English is now a vital part of the ‘voice’ that shares the hope for healing that Indian people and people everywhere long to hear.

These images were supported by the Native Diabetes Wellness Program, Division of Diabetes Translation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information call 505-232-9905 or 770-488-5285